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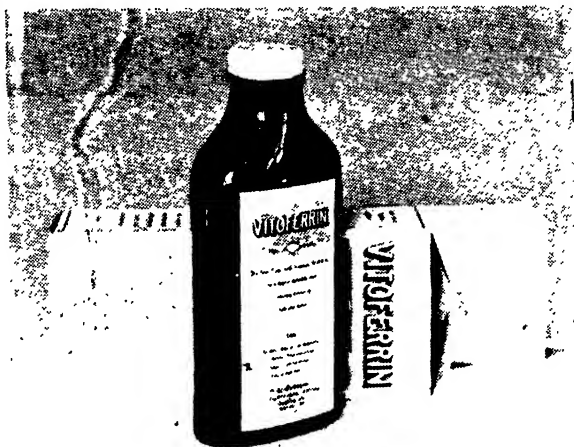
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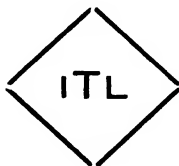
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Opinion of
Sir C. V. Raman, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S., N.L.

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'Triveni' is devoted to Art, Literature and History. Its main function is to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects.

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. . . he that laboureth right for love of Me
 Shall finally attain ! But, if in this
 Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure !
 —THE SONG CELESTIAL

‘The Triple Stream’

BY K. RAMAKOTISWARA RAU

THIS UNENDING PILGRIMAGE

A poet-friend whose affection for me is boundless, compared me to a lonely pilgrim pursuing a thorny path, with no protection against the scorching noonday sun, hoping yet that any moment the shrine of the Goddess may burst into view. Today, the heat is not less intense than when those beautiful verses were composed; nor have the thorns in the path blossomed into flowers. If anything, the conversion of *Triveni* into a Monthly last year has added considerably to my burden. But I continue to believe that this is work which is supremely worth doing; and I shall do it with my limited resources and with the co-operation of those who value cultural enterprises of this kind. To the friends who have all along helped *Triveni* with money and literary contributions, and to the proprietors of the Jupiter Press who have made it possible for the journal to be published punctually every month, I tender grateful thanks.

PEACE IN SIGHT?

In the latest statements bearing on the political impasse in India, an increasing anxiety to come to terms is noticeable on both sides. But, quite like the formal first meeting of the bridegroom's party and the bride's at a South Indian marriage, there is just the minimum of movement. This does not make for speed, while it undoubtedly satisfies the sense of dignity and prestige. Meanwhile, the *interim* Ministers in every Province, who are no better than interlopers, are loudly protesting their readiness to retire, the moment Congress decides to come in. In Madras, these protestations are coupled with a vituperative propaganda against the Congress in which it is stated *ad nauseam* that the great national organisation betrayed its trust by refusing to accept office unconditionally in the first instance. To people who are ever ready to clutch at office, it is inexplicable that anyone should dream of dictating terms to the Governors before forming Ministries.

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One phase of the controversy in Madras throws an interesting sidelight on men and methods. Sir K. V. Reddi contends that Congressmen's criticism of himself and his Ministry is particularly bitter because he happens to be a non-Brahmin! The Congress leader, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, very properly retorts that, even if by some miracle Sir K. V. became a Brahmin, the Congress would continue to attack the Ministry: it is a clash, not of castes but of principles.

All controversies are overshadowed for the time being by the exploits of the Police at Kottapattam in Guntur District. Every Indian paper, and every important publicist, has commented on this wholly unnecessary use of force on a band of young men and women intent on study, who, when their School of Politics was banned, disobeyed the order peacefully and offered no resistance to arrest. Public opinion has been thoroughly roused on this issue, and it is felt that the Ministry has shown a deplorable lack of sympathy and understanding and made an unwarranted inroad into the rights of the citizen. Sooner or later, the Legislature must meet. If the present Ministry happens to be in office till then, the Kottapattam affair is likely to form the subject-matter of a grave indictment against the Ministry. For, even while peace seems to be in sight, the maintenance of Law and Order assumes strange shapes. Madras has established a record in this respect.

COMMUNALISM IN LITERATURE

While Sir K. V. Reddi's aspersions on Brahmin Congressmen can only raise an incredulous smile, the proceedings of the Conference of non-Brahmin poets in Andhra must cause dejection of spirit to every genuine lover of literature and the arts. Communalism in literature is a graver evil than communalism in politics; in the nature of things, its effects are bound to be more far-reaching. The relations between poets and literary men all over Andhra have been marked by the utmost harmony. Telugu literature has been enriched by the joint endeavours of men from all communities. Nobody has sought to suppress or belittle the achievement of non-Brahmin poets. If today I were asked to mention off-hand the five or six outstanding literary figures in Andhra, I should certainly include my gifted friends D. Rami Reddy and Nayani Subba Rao among them. Through them, the poetry of Nature and the

'THE TRIPLE STREAM'

poetry of Love have respectively attained the loftiest heights in our day.

One contention raised at the Conference is that only a non-Brahmin can wield the native idiom of the common people or write with insight into their daily lives. This may be true within certain limits. It is akin to the claim made through the columns of *The London Mercury* sometime ago, that proletarian literature could be written only by members of the proletariat. But how about the *Yenki Patalu* of Nanduri Subba Rao or the *Malapalli* of Vunnava Lakshminarayana, which are the most touching pictures of contemporary life in the villages, written in the spoken language of the "lower orders" of society, in the Telugu country?

Any efforts to emphasise differences, rather than establish points of contact, in every sphere of life, are unworthy of men calling themselves *litterateurs*. Such men are playing into the hands of the communal-minded politician, and forfeiting their claim to interpret life in its fulness and its graciousness.

BOY SCOUTS AND 'BHARAT-KUMARS'

There is much in favour of Dr. Hardiker's suggestion to organise an all-India movement to train the young in ways of service. After Lord Baden-Powell's insulting remarks on the character of Indians, and his refusal to apologise for his statement, the scout movement in India ought to cut itself off from the British organisation. It is insufferable that our boys and girls should be drilled into possible supports for rampant Imperialism of the Kipling brand. If Dr. Hardiker will tour the different Provinces and discuss plans with those who have hitherto identified themselves with the Boy Scout movement, his efforts will bear abundant fruit.

A Gujarati Bhajan

(Translated by *Jayantilal Acharya*)

Are there those who could express it,
For it surpasses my feeble expression !
Those who realise have no speech for expression ;
And speech alone cannot make us realise.

The ways of the dumb, does the dumb one alone know ;
For him it is simply to understand and to smile.
The ways of the brave does the brave one alone
know ;

And the coward has not even an inkling.

Vain are all utterances here,
For the real One resides within.
Pearl-divers alone can bring the pearls,
And those that keep afloat are all mere swimmers.

The tongue alone does know the real taste of ghee ;
How could one proclaim whether it be sweet or sour ?
Says *Ravirama*¹ through the greatness of Bhana ;²
Incomprehensible and unfathomable are those realisa-
tions.

The doll of salt has merged unto water,
How could it emerge without ?

¹ The author.

² The author's *Guru*.

The Reign of Law in the Ramayana¹

BY V. NARAYANAN, M.A., M.L.

(Asst. Editor, 'The Tamil Lexicon,' Madras)

I love to think of the Ramayana as an elaboration of the Vedas,² and more particularly of a passage in the *Taittiriya Sakha* which claims my special allegiance. The eleventh *anuvaka* or section of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* says:

"Say what is true. Do your duty. Do not neglect the study of the Veda. After having brought to your teacher his proper reward, do not cut off the line of children. Do not swerve from the truth. Do not swerve from duty.....
..... Let your mother be to you like unto a god. Let your father be to you like unto a god. Let your teacher be to you like unto a god.....Whatever actions are blameless, those should be regarded, not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be observed by you, not other things.....If there should be any doubt in your mind with regard to any sacred act or with regard to conduct,—in that case, conduct yourself as Brahmanas who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein, whether they be appointed or not, as long as they are not too severe, but *devoted to Duty*. And with regard to things that have been spoken against, as Brahmanas do who possess good judgment conduct themselves therein, whether they be appointed or not, as long as they are not too severe, but devoted to Duty, so conduct yourself. This is the rule. This is the teaching. This is the true purport of the Veda. This is the command. Thus should you observe. Thus should this be observed."

The primary injunction is this Anuvaka is '*Dharmam chara*'—'Do your Duty'. The other injunctions group themselves as subsidiaries of this main injunction. Thus, *Satyam vada*—'speak the Truth'—is only an aspect, though an important one, of *Dharmam chara*. Similarly, the injunction, "Do not cut off the line of children" and the set of injunctions about considering one's mother, father and preceptor as gods.

¹ A paper read before the Samskrita Academy, Madras.

² Valmiki, it is said, chose the twin-sons of Rama who were well educated in the Vedas for the elaboration of the Vedas. See Ramayana Bk. I, canto 4, verse 6.

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What is Dharma? Occasions and situations often arise when there is an apparent conflict of Dharmas or courses of conduct? How is one to act then?

The *Anuvaka* answers: Dharma is what characterises the actions of Dharmic or Dharma-kama people. And there will be no conflict of Dharma, if you have, as your guide to conduct, the actions and reactions of the lovers of Dharma in similar occasions or situations. And the depiction of various situations of apparent conflict of Dharma, together with an elucidation of the actions of the Dharmatmas and Dharma-kamas, of righteous-souled people and lovers of righteousness, in those situations—this is the most noteworthy feature of the Ramayana.

I shall confine myself to a few remarks on the special injunctions in the above *Anuvaka* of the Upanishad before considering in general about Dharma or the Law.

The meaning of 'Satyam vada' does not stop with "Speak the truth" or "Speak the truth always; never tell a lie." It goes further: "Never let your words, spoken once, become untrue; keep your word at any cost. Do not try to wriggle out of it. Do not stick to the letter and kill the spirit. Do not interpret your words in such a manner as is convenient to you, if that interpretation is not absolutely the right interpretation. Give your words as wide a meaning as the hearer would give and fulfil them in all their details; those who hear your words do not know of your 'mental reservations' and it is not being truthful, if you disappoint them. The injunction is elaborated in all these ways and with all these and other ramifications in the lives of Dasaratha and of Rama. Particularly important in this connection are (1) the conduct of Dasaratha when Kaikeyi presses for her boons, and (2) the conduct of Rama after he had promised succour to the hermits of the Dandaka forest.

The next special injunction is: "Do not cut off the line of children." An immortality is achieved by the continuance of one's lineage. The thread of lineage, *praja-tantu*, must not be snapped in the middle. The son that is born to a person is his own self. Therefore it is that Dasaratha is struck with grief by the denial of a son to him. "That *Dharmajna* (knower of the Law) who was so full of glories and who was a great soul and who longed intensely for sons, had no son to

THE REIGN OF LAW IN THE RAMAYANA

continue his lineage" so says the Ramayana.¹ And what did the Dharmatma do? He remembered the injunction of Prajapati when he created the human beings and the sacrifices to gods. Prajapati said:² "With this (*i.e.*, sacrifice) shall ye cherish the gods and the gods shall cherish you. Thus cherishing one another, ye will obtain the highest good."

And he decided on the performance of the Asva-medha sacrifice. He informed sage Vashishta and others who encouraged him in the idea of Haya-medha Sacrifice. They say: "O King! you shall certainly have the sons that you desire, as you have got this Dharmika idea for the sake of obtaining sons."³ Four sons are, accordingly, born; and Dasaratha attains immortality. It is as if Dasaratha had taken one form as Rama and the three other forms as Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna to attend on Rama. Lakshmana who attends to the wants of Rama when He goes to the forest, builds at Panchavati, on the banks of the Godavari river, a very lovely hermitage for Rama and Sita; and thereupon Rama says: "Lakshmana, my father, the Dharmatma is, by having you as his son, not dead; for you know the Dharma and can enter into the minds of others and are for ever grateful."⁴

Similarly, when the sage Bharadwaja meets Bharata on his return from Chitrakuta with Sri Rama's sandals as his crown, he says to Bharata:

"He is not dead: we mourn in vain:

Thy blessed father lives again

Whose noble son we thus behold

Like Virtue's self in human mould."

"Your father, the long-armed Dasaratha is immortal, who has such a son as you, knowing and loving the Law (Dharma)."⁵ And the Sages, assembled on the Chitrakuta hill to hear Rama and Bharata converse, conclude:

"He is blessed whose two sons are thus experts in the Law and have their strength rooted in the Law; we who listened to their conversation love them both alike."⁶

It is the realisation of this fundamental truth of Immortality through continuance of lineage that prompted Dasaratha to contemplate the marriage of his sons when they had completed

¹ Ram. I viii, 1.

² Bhagavad Gita iii, 10.

³ Ram. I viii, 12.

⁴ Ram. III xv, 29.

⁵ Ram II cxiii, 17.

⁶ Ram II cxii, 3.

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their course of education in the Vedas and the Vedangas and were on the threshold of manhood.

"Then, that Dharmatma King Dasaratha thought of their marriage and discussed it with his preceptors and his kindred."¹

The basic idea behind the institution of marriage is thus seen to be Immortalisation through continuance of lineage. Hence arise the duties of parents as regards the marriage of their children; and the duties of children in submitting to the choice of their parents or in obtaining their parents' approval to their choice.

In the last canto of the Balakanda,² it is said that Sita was dear to Rama as she was his father's choice. In the Kusanabha episode, the daughters of that king say:

"Our father is our master; he is our supreme God. He to whom he gives us as brides becomes our husband."³

Sita tells Anasuya that Rama paused for his father's approval before accepting the gift of Sita from Janaka's hands:

"When I was thus given away (by my father) Raghava did not accept the gift immediately, as He did not know the wishes of His father, the Lord of Ayodhya."⁴

I shall now pass on to the third set of injunctions: "Consider your mother as God; consider your father as God; consider your teacher as God." I take these three injunctions together because Rama does so in the Ramayana.⁵ Says Rama: "Who will go beyond his mother, father and preceptor who are within his reach, and by what means will he propitiate God who is not within his reach?"

God is intangible. By what ways can we please Him, it is not possible for us to know. But our parents and our preceptors,—we know them; their overflowing love towards us places them in our hands. Whatever we may do unto them, they are bound to take as causing them pleasure. Then, why not make *them* our gods? The Vedas, in the above *Anuvaka* especially, authorise us to do so.

Having a plurality of gods often leads to conflict. Who is the highest among these gods, to whose wishes we must subordinate everything else? The answer of the Ramayana is clear. The father is the Highest God.

¹ Ram. I xviii, 36.

² Ram. I lxxvii, 27.

³ Ram. I xxxii, 21.

⁴ Ram. II cx viii, 51.

⁵ Ram. II xxx, 33.

THE REIGN OF LAW IN THE RAMAYANA

Mother Kausalya claims from Rama equal, if not superior allegiance, apparently because the mother is first mentioned in the above Upanishadic passage. She says to Rama, when he came to take leave of her and go to the forest: "Just as the King is worthy of your respect, even so, to a greater degree I am worthy of your respect. I do not give you permission; you must not go hence to the forest."¹

But note Rama's answer—an answer which was full of Dharma and which came from a Dharmatma:

"And the Dharmatma Rama spake these words full of Dharma: 'I have no power to transgress my father's words. I beg of you with bowed head, I desire to go to the forest.'"

And note the genteel rebuke in this verse: "This is the Eternal Law—the Sanatana Dharma—by you, by me, by Sita, by Lakshmana and by Sumitra, must be obeyed the words of my father."

Father, thus, gets precedence over mother, because he is mother's god.

Next, the preceptor Vashishta claims precedence from Rama over Dasaratha; he, Vashishta, is not only Rama's preceptor but the preceptor of his father and god, Dasaratha.

"To one born on this earth, there are three elders—the preceptor, father and mother. Father begets him; but the preceptor gives him wisdom. Hence he is Guru, superior."²

But Rama demurs to this proposition, though his answer is characteristically inoffensive: "In return for what the mother and the father do always for their son, what can be done as a recompense for what the mother and the father did."

I shall now pass on to the main theme—'Do your Duty.' The Ramayana is one continuous paean in praise of the sovereignty of the Law. The epic is full of trying situations; and depictions abound, of the conduct of the several Dharmatmas, Dharmajnas and Dharmaratas in those situations.

At the outset, we are told that the poet himself is a Dharmatma.

"In that Dharmatma of a sage arose Pity."³

He sees, as in the hollow of his hand, the events of the epic, by the power of Dharma:

¹ Ram. II xxi, 21 & 24.

² Ram. II xxi, 29-30.

³ Ram. II xxi, 49².

⁴ Ram. II cxi, 2-3.

⁵ Ram. II cxi, 9.

⁶ Ram. I ii, 13.

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"And the smiles and the speeches and the movements and the actions—all this, he saw exactly as it happened, by the strength of Dharma (or by *Dharma-virya*.)"¹

His poem is full of Dharma.² And the audience at its first recital consisted of Dharma-vatsalas.³ We will now deal with the main characters of his Epic. First, Dasaratha: he is stated at the outset to be a Dharmarata.⁴ The Devas request Vishnu to be born as the four sons of that Dharma-jna.⁵

When Dasaratha proposes to crown Rama as Yuvaraja, his people rejoice and they bless him the Dharmatma thus: "May that Dharmatma, the blameless King Dasaratha, live long, by whose favour we shall soon see Rama crowned."⁶ When, later, he is oppressed by the insistence of his Queen Kaikeyi, he is not willing to break his word and swerve from Dharma. He says to Sumantra who sees him in bed early next morning: "I feel bound by the bands of Dharma; and my mind is in confusion. I desire to see the (Dharmika) Law-abiding Rama, my dear and eldest son."⁷ So, when Rama comes to his mother Kausalya to inform her of the averted coronation, she, unaware of what had transpired overnight, states in the normal manner in what proves to be a supreme stroke of irony: "Rama, see your father the King who keeps true to his word. Today the Dharmatma is about to crown you as Yuvaraja."⁸

And this is how Bharata, unaware of what had transpired during his absence from Ayodhya, inquires of his mother Kaikeyi when she has informed him only of his father's death:

"That *Dharma-vid*, that *Dharma-nitya* who is strong in keeping his promises and who always sticks to truth—that noble king my father—what were his last words?"⁹

It is only thereafter, he learns, at what cost Dasaratha has been "a knower of the Law, one who is constantly rooted in the Law, true to his word and fixed in his purpose."

Then, Kausalya and Sumitra. Bharata enquires of the messengers from Ayodhya about "that noble Queen who is Dharma-nirata, Dharma-jna and Dharma-darsini, Kausalya, the mother of Rama the wise."¹⁰ Such is Queen Kausalya's reputation. Sumitra's firm stand on 'the Law' is revealed in her

¹ Ram. I iii, 4.

² Ram. I iv, 12.

³ Ram. I iv, 16.

⁴ Ram. I vi, 2.

⁵ Ram. I xv, 19.

⁶ Ram. II vi, 24.

⁷ Ram. II xiv, 24.

⁸ Ram. II xx, 24.

⁹ Ram. II lxxii, 3-4.

¹⁰ Ram. II lxx, 8.

THE REIGN OF LAW IN THE RAMAYANA

words of comfort to Kausalya, "Rama" is rooted in Dharma; he does not therefore deserve to grieve over"¹; as well as in her words of advice to her son Lakshmana.² We may next consider Bharata and Lakshmana.

Dasaratha speaks of Bharata to Rama as "a Dharmatma who follows his elder brother"³; and he says to Kaikeyi:

"Without Rama, Bharata will not remain in the kingdom; I consider him as stronger and more firmly rooted in Dharma than even Rama,"⁴

When Rama consoles Kausalya on the eve of his departure to the forest, he refers to Bharata in these words:

"And the Dharmatma Bharata bears love towards all living things. He will certainly attend on you; for he always takes delight in Dharma."⁵

When Rama is challenged by the dying monkey-chief Vali to defend his conduct, he starts by stating that the love of the Law dominates the character of Bharata who rules over all the land.

Of Lakshmana, Rama is equally emphatic. He even tells Lakshmana to his face—"You are very affectionate, brave and always delighted with Dharma, firmly taking your stand on the ways of the good. You are dear as Life and have control over your senses; you are both my brother and my friend."⁶

We may next consider Vibhishana and Sugriva.

Says Surpanakha at the outset, "But Vibhishana is a Dharmatma, and not a Rakshasa in his actions."⁷

When the spy Suka points him out to Ravana, among the besiegers of the city of Lanka, he describes him in these words: "Single-handed he can, by his prowess, destroy Lanka; for, in him Law is firmly rooted; and he does not swerve from the Law."⁸

When Vibhishana is accused by Indrajit of perfidy, he replies: "I do not delight in cruelty; I do not delight in

¹ Ram. II xliv, 4.

² "This is the Law followed by the good—that one should follow his elder brother." Ram. II xl, 6.

³ Ram. II iv, 26.

⁴ Ram. II xii, 62.

⁵ Ram. II xxiv, 22.

⁶ The Dharmatma Bharata, upright and truthful, and deep in the love of the Law, love and wealth, rules the world, taking delight in administering justice by punishments and rewards. Ram. IV xviii, 7.

⁷ Ram. II xxxi, 20.

⁸ Ram. III xiii, 24.

⁹ Ram. VI xxviii, 17-19.

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a-dharma; can a brother of evil propensities drive away his own brother?"¹ Our first introduction to Sugriva is in these words: "Not far from there is seen the Rishyamuka hill, wherein dwells the Dharmatma Sugriva, the son of the Sun."

Lastly, we come to Sita and Rama. When Sita appeals to Rama, not to go drawn sword in hand into the forest, she says: "You are truth-loving and great, brother of Lakshmana; in you are established Truth and Law (*Dharma*) and everything besides."² Similarly when Lakshmana dispatches the fatal arrow at Indrajit he does so with this invocation: "If Rama, the son of Dasaratha is a Dharmatma and a truth lover, unequalled in valour, O arrow, kill this son of Ravana."³

Sita is his ideal consort, *Saha-dharmacharini*. She tells Anasuya, the ideal of wifely devotion: "I too know this, that the husband of a woman is her master and superior"⁴ and she follows that statement up with a fond wish that Rama were not the Dharmatma that he was, for her to prove the depth of her wifely devotion.⁵

And when her wish takes form, as it were, in the following utterance of Rama: "I have no affection for you; you may go hence wherever you like,"⁶ she proves her innocence by jumping into the fire with this invocation on her lips: "As my heart has never deviated from Raghava, therefore may the all-knowing Fire protect me on every side. As I have not by deed, thought or word swerved from Raghava who knows the entire Dharma, so may Fire protect me."⁷

So, Rama is a *Sarvadharmajna*. As Narada says at the outset, "He is a *Dharmajna*; and he is the protector of Dharma."⁸

The audience at the Palace Hall praised Rama in these words, when Dasaratha proposed to anoint him as Yuvaraja: "Rama is the ideal good man; he is engrossed in Truth and in the Law. The Law and Prosperity were born of Rama."⁹ His support of Dharma is well known. Hence Kausalya prays, "May that Dharma which you protect, protect you in its turn."¹⁰ When pressed by Kaikeyi not to tarry in Ayodhya, he says:

¹ Ram. VI lxxvii, 22.

² Ram. VI xci, 72.

³ Ram. VI cxviii, 21.

⁴ Ram. II ii, 29.

⁵ Ram. III lxxv, 28.

⁶ Ram. II cviii, 2.

⁷ Ram. VI cxix, 24-26.

⁸ Ram. II xx v, 3.

⁹ Ram. III ix, 7.

¹⁰ Ram. II cviii, 3, 4.

¹¹ Ram. I i, 12 and 13.

THE REIGN OF LAW IN THE RAMAYANA

"Know me to be the equal of the Rishis attached only to the Pure and Perfect Law."¹

When Sita implores him to take her with him to the forest, she uses this as an argument: "That which is dear to you; for whose sake you vex yourself so much; to that Dharma be subservient always and take me to the forest."² To which he replies that his Duty to his father pre-dominates.³ "Otherwise," says Rama, "I would not go to the forest and expose you to all the perils of a forest life." Again, he says to Lakshmana: "Afraid of *A-dharma* and of the other world, I do not crown myself today."⁴

Hanuman is sure that as Rama is a Dharmatma, Fire will not touch his wife.⁵ "His Dharmajnatva or 'knowledge of the Law' is well known" says Sita to Ravana,⁶ even before he makes the famous declaration, "If a person comes to me even once for help and says 'I am yours', I give that person protection from all living things,—this is my vow." This declaration does not in consequence come to Sugriva and others who hear it as a surprise. For, Sugriva says: "Where is the wonder, O Knower of the Law who is the ruler of the world anxious to make everybody happy, if you speak words of mercy, being powerful and established in the right path."⁷

What is Dharma?

There is a common belief that when there are alternative courses of action and one does not know which of them is the correct course, one must choose the most arduous and difficult path as the right path. This idea is mentioned in the Ramayana, only to be refuted. Bharata says to Rama: "But if you think of doing that Duty which requires pain and exertion, by protecting the four castes as king, obtain that pain."⁸ The right view is that *klesa* or suffering is not the badge of *Dharma*, though, as Lakshmana points out in another place, the only excuse for suffering is when Dharma necessitates it.⁹

What, then, is Dharma?

To this general question, the Ramayana gives a general answer: The *antaratma* or the conscience is the guide, as Rama says

¹ Ram. II xix, 20.

⁴ Ram. II liii, 26.

⁷ Ram. VI xviii, 36.

² Ram. II xxx, 9.

⁵ Ram. V lv, 24.

⁸ Ram. II. cvi, 21.

³ Ram. II xxx, 30-31.

⁶ Ram. V xxi, 20.

⁹ Ram. III L, 18.

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to Vali.¹ But to us who came after the Ramayana, there is another and a more tangible answer: "Rama is Dharma Incarnate."² His actions reveal all the facets of the jewel of the Law. He walks the earth, desirous of extending the reign of the Law.³ We can model our lives on His and ever seek His approval and approbation in all our actions. Everywhere, people say "Rama, Rama, Rama" and become Dharmatmas after Him.

"When Rama ruled the kingdom, the people talked 'Rama, Rama, Rama' and the world became one with Rama. The people became lovers of the Law, when Rama was the King; all of them had all desirable qualities; and all of them were attached to the Law."⁴ And *Rama-rajya* became synonymous with *Dharma-rajya*—the Reign of the Law.

¹ Ram. IV xviii, 15.

² Ram. III xxxvii, 13.

³ Ram. IV xviii, 9.

⁴ Ram. VI cxxxi, 102.

Early Telugu Poetry—

Tikkana to Srinadhya

BY K. LAKSHMI RANJANAM

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In an age of religious strife Tikkana remained an Advaitin, and his work was a strong plea to his countrymen for abandoning the barren path of sectarian animosity and realising the oneness of the Divine Being. To emphasise this lesson, Tikkana rose above the practice of the time and dedicated his Muse to Hari-Hara-Natha—the God who is Siva and Vishnu at the same time. Apostrophising his inspiring ideal he said: "The garland of bones (of Siva) or the *Kaustubha* (breast-jewel of Vishnu); which is more acceptable to you, O Lord? The deadly black poison (drunk by Siva) or the milk at the breasts of Yasoda (foster-mother of Krishna), which is more palatable to you, Lord? Tell me." "Away," said Tikkana, "with wrangling in the name of God." If the Andhras of the present day are generally Advaitins (Monists), Tikkana's *Mahabharata*, more than any philosophical disquisitions, made them what they are.

Tikkana's Advaitism does not obtrude in his poetry. He was above everything a poet and an artist. The perfume of his religious tolerance is wafted from afar. He felt that he was divinely inspired to undertake the great task of completing the work of Nannaya. Poetic expression was a divine mission, and a means to reach the goal of eternal beatitude. Rather, the urge to launch upon the noble task came to him from the Divine Monitor who appeared to him in his dream, and, as if to favour him, asked him to dedicate his work to Himself. Tikkana was in ecstasy, and, with tears flowing begged of Him eternal bliss free from the round of births. Like Milton he would exclaim, "Sing, Heavenly Muse!" Thus inspired and divinely blessed, Tikkana vowed that he would render the story of the *Mahabharata* in such a way that the Andhra world should be fascinated—every

¹ The earlier article—'Nannaya to Tikkana'—appeared in *Triveni* for April, 1937.

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part of it must be carved out into an artistic piece by itself. The whole would thus be a series of cut-stones erected into a grand structure. He was as good as his word. Every single portion was so dressed by him with a view to unity of plot, chronological sequence of events, development of character, speech and actions appropriate to the speaker, that an artistic effect is produced at every stage. His work is a marvellous edifice where every stone is there not by accident but by design, and the whole gives us an insight into his genius.

Tikkana's title to be reckoned amongst the great poets of the world, is based on his masterly analysis of the human mind and its workings,—the motives of men and the passions that sway them. He searches the hearts of his characters, the ebb and tide of their feelings, and associates them with physical gestures appropriate to the mood. In this we see Tikkana the dramatist. The dramatic treatment of epic material is his supreme achievement. He withdraws himself into the background and allows his heroes and heroines to speak for themselves and lay bare their innermost hearts to us. He is at his happiest in giving appropriate speeches to the characters, and, as in a stage direction, never omits the gestures and facial expressions they have to display. The delineation of character is his *forte*. Nannaya contents himself with the march of the story, and his men and women just play over the surface like fish in a rivulet. He has his eye mainly on narration, and art only comes next with him. With Tikkana, art is everything. Heroes and heroines in his hands assume an individuality of their own, and each character is a study in human nature. The flux and reflux of their emotions are the subjects of special attention to the art of Tikkana. Krishna and Yudhishtira, Draupadi and Kunti and a host of others, all stand out pre-eminently as examples of types and individuals, and Tikkana probes deep into them and sets forth with minute detail the motives of their life and actions. In this masterly search of the human heart Tikkana has few compeers. Valmiki is a great story-teller. Milton has a sublime imagination, but the human in his poetry is only of the second best. Kalidasa and Shakespeare alone, as far as we know, seem to share with Tikkana this divine insight into the innermost chambers of the human heart.

Tikkana the dramatist is seen in the realistic nature of his vision which "rolls forth from heaven to earth and earth to

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heaven." He sees his characters in his imagination as living human beings, erring and sinning, and not as mere wooden idols. Draupadi with him is not the passive queen of the five Pandava brothers but a passionate and valiant woman who can stir men to great action; Krishna, not a shady diplomatist but an ideal hero, warrior and statesman. In writing an epic as if it were a drama, Tikkana was a greater success than Milton. His characters do not make long and undramatic discourses, however well-worded and imaginative. They engage in brief combats of the wit and short repartee. One does not feel one's time heavy in listening to them. And Tikkana's characters seem to vie with one another in the art of speech and diplomacy. With him they are all consummate actors and diplomats. Herein is reflected Tikkana, the statesman. He gave us three masterly pictures of the statesmanship of his conception: Krishna, Sanjaya, and the eldest of the Pandavas. The utterances of these remarkable men would be fit study even for the politicians and statesmen of today. Sanjaya, the Minister of the Kauravas, sent on a peace mission to the Pandavas, offers an example of the supple politician. He would give nothing to the opponents but tries to wean them away from the war path by cajolery and fulsome praise. The eldest of the Pandavas, with consummate mastery over his own mind, would put the opponent in the wrong and show him as aggressor to the world by his masterly inactivity. But the greatest in importance is Lord Krishna, the ideal statesman of India. His is a straight fight for righteousness and the preservation of one's rights, and he would not hesitate to sound the war bugle if only to end war for the future.

Everything is not yet said of Tikkana when we picture him as a poet and diplomatist. He was, more than anything, a man of action and herein lies his strength and greatness. Tikkana was a great soldier too, and this makes his treatment of the great war between the Kurus and the Panchalas an awe-inspiring study in warfare. The pitched battles and individual contests, the mass tumult and the war din, all must have marched forth before his mental vision and reverberated in his ear, for him to have presented us with such realistic descriptions of war. Tikkana knows the manouvres of the commander, and we are left wondering whether they are his manouvres or those of his heroes. He describes them with the precise attention to tech-

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nicalities worthy of a soldier by profession, and this leads us to infer that Tikkana must have actually taken the field sometime as a commander. Tikkana the master-manouvreur is seen in Drona; Tikkana the hero and fighter is exemplified in Bhishma and Arjuna. As we go on examining Tikkana, he seems to yield an ever increasing harvest of points of study about his art and life. If we were to see Tikkana in everything he describes, we will have no end to the list of his achievements in life. His intimacy with the subtleties of wrestling and the use of the terrific mace of Bhima and Duryodhana, is so telling in effect that we must see the wrestler also in Tikkana. But we will be nearer the truth if we ascribe the multifarious achievements of Tikkana to his supreme vision as a poet, and to his capacity to range his vision from the atom to the universe and body forth the objects of his imagination into the realm of ordinary experience, so that he who runs may see the sublime and the beautiful.

As an architect of the word, Tikkana is easily in the first rank of poets. An examination of his great poem in the light of Indian principles of literary criticism, is of great value. According to this view, the suggested meaning is the touchstone of the *Kavya* of the highest order. Tikkana is a master of this type of composition. Even Nannaya falls behind him somewhat, in this respect. Later poets could but weave out patched-up imitations of Tikkana's *dhvani* style. Another excellence of Tikkana is his success in developing the *rasa* or sentiment in poetry. Happily for the colossal nature of his genius, he had a subject wide as the world; and situations which demanded a worthy treatment were innumerable. An artist sometimes is unlucky in the choice of the material and his genius may be wasted on the trivial. Like the *Iliad* the *Mahabharata* is a mine of heroism and pathos. Tikkana the conscious artist is seen in the selection of his material. He says:

"The story is of gripping interest and is delightful. The incidents are sublime and capable of suggesting all the passionate moods (*rasas*). It is well worth writing these portions of the *Mahabharata* in Telugu that the wise may be gratified."

Now Tikkana is highly suggestive in the *reeti* (style) he adopts in setting forth these sentiments. For the erotic sentiment

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he selects short words of few syllables, of purely Telugu origin (*desi*), and groups them into the garland of love. His considered view seems to be that it is the *desi* element in Telugu that supplies the music of the language, while the Sanskrit element makes for vigour and strength. For passionate moods like anger, terror and rage, he seizes upon guttural sounds, highly Sanskritised diction, and compounds. Scenes wherein he describes the storms raging in the breast of Bhima, the apostle of the mighty, are an apt illustration of this. For these situations Tikkana requires a larger mould in which to crowd his teeming ideas. The first four lines of the verse pile similes of an awe-inspiring nature one upon the other, and when the climax is reached Tikkana overwhelms us with a reverberating compound to make the whole resound as in a deep cave. This side of his art and genius were so unearthly that no later poet dreamed of imitating him. They took the clue from him in presenting the erotic sentiment, but they lacked the refreshing originality and natural flavour of his similes.

Heavy as the burden of Tikkana's thought is, he delights to load it in tiny vessels. He has an abhorrence of the discursive and the tedious. He likes to express great sentiments in brief words and let the reader's imagination supply the details and missing links. He is very fond of the tone of the statesman, not saying much but saying enough, not being ruffled in spirit but giving an unmistakable indication of his mind. The speeches of Sanjaya and Krishna are the best illustration of Tikkana's style. Herein he makes them speak in enigmas and short verses which can be made to interpret for and against the enemy. Tikkana makes the largest use of the indigenous short-metres that are in the nature of couplets. It is only for descriptions of natural scenery and for elaborate portraiture that he has recourse to the Sanskrit *vṛitta* and long Telugu metres. His passion for economy of expression is on a par with that of Shakespeare in *Hamlet* and *Lear*, and Kalidasa in *Shakuntala*. This accounts for the modern dictum that his style is of the *narikela* variety. Like the cocoanut, it presents a slight obstacle on the outer side, but when once it is laid bare it is sweet and delicious.

There is yet another reason which makes the poetry of Tikkana less easily understood at the present day than that of

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Nannaya. Tikkana makes an abundant use of the purely Telugu idiom and vocabulary, which, either on account of the march of centuries or owing to the heavy grafting of Sanskrit on later day Telugu, is slightly out of the way to the modern reader. Nannaya, true to his scholarly bias, made free use of the *tatsama* and he must have had a better vision of the trend of the rising Telugu. Later poets imitated him in this and rather outdistanced him. Nevertheless, Nannaya's style, with an apt mingling of *tatsama*, came to stay and holds the field at present. Tikkana on the other hand was thoroughly conversant with the men and manners of his age, and must have felt it a duty to use the native idiom and proverb as far as possible, if his poem was to appeal to one and all and not cater to the taste of the scholar only. But time seems to have reversed his judgment; and yet, if we want to rehabilitate Telugu and make it a rich instrument for the expression of subtle ideas with our own material, we have to turn to Tikkana and explore in his mine of native idiom. This will surely save us the awkwardness of borrowing from other mediums for wealth and variety of expression.

The test of a great poet is his popularity, and often it is his only reward. Tikkana enjoyed his full share of it in his own life-time. Contemporary poets were in raptures over his personality and work. One of them, Ketana, honoured him by making him *Kriti-pati* (patron) of a poem. This is the highest meed of reverential love which an Andhra can confer on his living idol. Kings alone could buy this honour by patronising poets, but Tikkana, the poet of poets, had it unsought. He was further deified and was given the title of *Kavi-Brahma*, the Lord of Poets. His country did not relegate him to the fate of Milton and wring the deep moan from his great heart "fallen on evil days and clime." In rapturous admiration, one of the poets that was trained in his school sang, "If the tongue has to utter the name of a devotee of Siva it will do well to take the name of Tikkana," and so on. And posterity remained true to him, and to this day he is easily the greatest of our poets: Nannaya and Tikkana are celebrated by literary anniversaries.

The ball that was set in motion by Nannaya and Tikkana continued to roll on. The age of the *Purana* was in full swing and the first instinct of every poet was to seize upon a *Purana* from Sanskrit and render it into Telugu. The translations

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were not literal and *verbatim*, but free adaptations with as much originality and concentration as the poet was capable of. Occasionally a poet selected one of the great *Kavyas* of Sanskrit and poetised it. Thus Ketana rendered Dandin's *Dasa-kumara-charita* into verse. The aim of the Puranic age was to combine virtue and instruction with poetry. The verse was simple and charming, though not always of the highest order. There are pre-eminent figures also. Yerrana who was a Court-Poet of the early Reddi Rulers of Kondavidu was the last of the great classic writers. He supplied the portion of the third book of the *Mahabharata* which Nannaya broke off in the middle and which Tikkana did not take in hand. Yerrana was the author of other *Puranas*, chiefly of *Harivamsa* which celebrated the history of Krishna and his race. Yerrana was no mean poet, and he combined the fluidity of Nannaya and the terseness of Tikkana in his diction.

The Andhra country did not possess any central and unifying hegemony during this period. The Kakatiya dynasty dropped the sceptre, and the Vijayanagara Empire did not fly its banner yet. The land was ruled by a number of chieftains noted for war and prowess. The Reddi Kings of Kondavidu in Guntur, and of Rajahmundry in the Godavari district, and the Velama Princes of the Nizam's Dominions, were noted for their patronage of Telugu poets. The poets dedicated their works to the leading men in return for patronage. It was but natural that they should take an exaggerated view of the achievements of their patrons, and self-respecting men felt that the holy art of poesy was degraded to the level of a profit-making business and lost its divine purpose. This sentiment received the fullest expression in the person of Potana. He belonged to a village named Bommera near Warangal. This is one of the many instances of the Nizam's Dominions being the nursery of the Telugu people and their language for centuries. Potana was the chosen of the Goddess of Poverty, and Sarvajna Singa of the Recharla family offered him patronage in return for the dedication of a poem. Potana refused proudly and declared to the world through his *Andhra Bhagavata*:

"Who would barter away the Divine Muse, tender like the young shoots of the mango tree, by dedicating it to vicious men? Who is there that is so mean that he would relish

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the crumbs so obtained? Better that poets should live as toiling farmers, or fade away in the midst of dense forests, subsisting on leaves, than that they should demean themselves."

He announces to the world in an unmistakable voice that, to him (Potana), the luxuries of the world, the villages, the carriages, the ornaments that are obtained by selling his art to kings, are all 'unsubstantial airy nothings' and he would lay his art at the altar of the Highest Being. The *Bhagavata* of Potana is universally popular, and next to the Telugu *Mahabharata*, it reigns supreme in the hearts of the Andhra people. Potana was a devotee and he pours out his heart to his Lord in impassioned verse. Potana was a self-made scholar and man, and he took upon himself the title 'Inspired by Nature' (*Sahaja-Panditya*).

Quite the contrary to Potana in his exalted conception of his Muse was the poet Srinadha. Tradition has it that he was the brother-in-law of Potana. But there is no internal evidence to this effect. The contrast between them was so pronounced that people instinctively uttered their names together. Srinadha was a lover of this green earth and its variegated life. He could enjoy a good dish as well as a good poem. Life with him was not an arid preparation for the hereafter, and he enjoyed life at its best. He was not worried by any considerations against making his art pay for his luxurious life. He freely dedicated his numerous works to one and all, from the king down to his wealthy merchant. His best works are a translation of the Sanskrit *Naishadha* of Sri Harsha, and many adaptations of the *Puranas*. Srinadha was an aesthete, and his life is reflected in his poetry. It is highly rhythmical and polished. He was a great scholar and a master of many languages. This accounts for his great bias towards Sanskrit idiom, and he set the example of highly Sanskritised diction to the poets of the *Prabandha* period. He considered his poetry the proper field for a full flourish of his scholarly gifts. With his luxurious ways of life, Srinadha fell on evil days towards the end, and suffered at the hands of petty rulers who had scant respect for his erudition and poetic talent.

Light, Not Too Light

BY C. L. R. SASTRI

I

The path of the essayist is not, let me suggest, exactly strewn with roses. In his case the difficulty is not a dearth, but a plethora, of subjects. His terms of reference do not hedge his fancy in by finicking restrictions of this or that nature: they are wide as the overhanging canopy itself. He may, metaphorically speaking, roam the heavens above, the earth below, and the waters underneath the earth; and if still he cannot hit upon a theme, or, hitting upon it, cannot 'expand' it to the 'measure of his intention,' the fault, certainly, lies in himself, not in his stars. Imaginatively, he may range, at his sweet will, not only from China to Peru and from Khorasan to Kidderminster, but he may with equal freedom, tackle, while so doing, matters as diverse as a lady's commerce with her looking-glass and a man's intercourse with his Maker. He may elect either to be learned or to be light: to be ponderous or to be merely playful. It is touch and go whether he chooses to be 'sober, steadfast, and demure' and to keep his 'wonted state,'

'With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,'

or else to drench his essay through and through with a merciless shower of

'Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,'

and generally to give full rein to the spirit of delight. Today he may, with becoming gravity, discourse upon Plato and Aristotle, Xenophon and Longinus, and tomorrow, without so much as a 'by your leave,' or a 'with your leave,' write ecstatically on the Beaumont Committee's Report on the Indian Cricket tour in England, or the clove trade in Zanzibar. If he is a capable fellow he can make even a column of statistics interesting,

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and can deal with Freud and Jung, Jeans and Eddington, to excellent purpose; and, given this necessary condition again, the state of the American cotton market, and the decline and fall of the gold standard, and the romantic history of the devaluation of the franc, will be all the same to him. The fact is that essayists, like others, have their lean periods, their fallow times; and it is then that their inherent worth comes out. One cannot always be at the top of one's form. Take Mr. Robert Lynd, for instance. He has been contributing an essay every week to the *New Statesman* since *auld lang syne*: which, being interpreted, means, since the year 1913, when that famous weekly was started. He has himself modestly estimated that up to April 1934, he must have written about 1,600,000 words by way of 'middles' to that paper; and safeguarded himself by saying: 'If this be imputed to me as a crime my excuse must be that my poverty, and not my will, consented.'

II

Well, what does Mr. Lynd do? He has, if we are to believe him, a rooted habit of procrastination. He has a job to do, but is averse from doing it, and so willy-nilly postpones it till the last avoidable moment; and, what is more, has an excuse ever ready—connecting the delay with the mislaying of his fountain-pen, or the dropping of a bottle of ink on to the sheets on which he had been writing, or the kitten's lapping up all the milk in the cupboard, or the falling asleep of the man in the moon. These are my own fancies, but it would appear that 'Y.Y.' is really ingenious in his apologies. He confesses:

"From an early age, I wanted to write, but I always hated—and still hate—beginning to write.....I am like a man who wants to go somewhere in his motor car, and whose engine needs cranking up, and who would gladly avoid the effort of cranking up the engine. Hence, even if I had a week in which to write an article, I should find it difficult to begin writing till the last hours of the last day of the week. Expected to deliver my article by the first post on Thursday morning, I still found myself late on Wednesday night doing my utmost to dodge the necessity of work. How often have I succeeded so well that I have had to set the alarm clock for six and to go down and compel myself to tackle the detested task on a wintry Thursday morning!" (See his Essay, 'A Thousand and one "Middles"' in the *New Statesman* of April 14, 1934.)

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This constitutional lethargy I also share: and if only I had a tenth part of Mr. Lynd's skill I should have no hesitation in saying that this passage expresses myself—more or less. But that is not the point. The point is that, his temperament being such, he finds himself now and then in a fix: on what should he write? If nothing better offers, and the last minute has arrived, he takes up a dictionary and fills up three columns with what comes in handy; and yet contrives that the resulting attempt shall be both readable and reasonable. Therein lies the secret of your master-essayist. Did I begin my article by positing that an essayist suffers, not from a dearth, but from a plethora, of subjects? It is illustrated most aptly in the example I have chosen. Mr. Lynd would have had his work cut out for him if he had a subject of limited scope to handle: he would not, then, have had to *run* after it himself and be in a perpetual state of suspense about it. The essayist's job is really not so easy as it looks. Having a veritable universe of themes to select from, he is ever on the horns of a dilemma; and probably ends up by selecting the least suitable. On the other hand, it is comparatively simple if you have to dissertate on the economic condition of the Neolithic man, or the fashion in ladies' hats in the eighteenth century, or the decline and fall of the Moghul Empire. You have to mug up your subject, that is all, and to take care not to botch it too conspicuously in telling the world what Mr. A or Mrs. B has already told it in a more authoritative and, withal, a more convincing, style. But an essayist has both to choose his subject and to illuminate it from unexpected angles. His is a pioneer's work; and, like it, the more praiseworthy.

III

I do not, of course, pretend to be an essayist 'as to the manner born.' We, in India, do not encourage essayists in our midst: we are much too serious for that. We are, as a race, not only not capable of the light touch, but are prone, on the rare occasions when we do meet with it, to look down upon it as though it were of baseness all compact. While articles on Bimetallism and the Binder Report are welcomed with both hands, essays are strictly taboo. I am a lover of essays. I think that I may legitimately boast that I have read as many English essays—especially modern English essays—as anybody else. In

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English Literature I am fondest of essays and literary criticism and *belles-lettres* generally: even fiction comes only after these. We have to deal with another difficulty. An *essai*, by its very nature, is lavish of the first person singular: because, in a manner of speaking, it is a record—a haphazard record, but a record nonetheless—of one's own experience. Consequently, the element of autobiography cannot be altogether dispensed with. Now, this is not misunderstood in England: in India it is far otherwise. The vice of egotism is easily attributed here, and when once it is attributed it is pretty difficult for the condemned fellow to wriggle himself out of that label. I have myself met many youngsters—as well as oldsters, if I may say so—who did not feel the slightest compunction in gesticulating away the essays of Messrs. Lynd, Lucas, and Gardiner, Belloc, Chesterton, and Priestley. They brushed them aside like things of no moment—mere flotsam and jetsam floating on the sea of one's mind. "Why," they would say, "there is not much stuff in this: there is nothing for the teeth of the intellect to bite on. It is neither a feast of reason nor a flow of soul. It is a mere rambling discourse, a will o' the wisp, a flimsy gossamer, a bed of feathers, thistledown, what you will, not a serious effort, nor does it make any show of harnessing the forces of man's thought down the ages to its particular requirements. Away with it!" The truth is that this criticism misses its mark. These essays, in the first place, are not so devoid of ideas as we are asked to believe. Secondly, the writers concerned have nowhere indicated that they have, in penning them, set out to instruct mankind in all the arts and sciences that ever were. Their purpose was the humbler one of entertaining their readers for the space of half an hour or so, and if, in the process, they managed not to go off the deep end they were quite content. As for this mania for ideas, I have long since arrived at the conclusion that it does not amount to much. My experience has been that very few of those who complain of this deficiency in others are themselves chockfull of them: the current of their beings cannot be said to be overflowing with what Browning has called

'Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped.'

LIGHT, NOT TOO LIGHT

Your self-styled serious person is, really, in the majority of instances, shallow at bottom. No ideas in Mr. Hilaire Belloc's essay on 'Nothing'? No ideas in Mr. Priestley's essay on 'A Fish in Bayswater'? No ideas in the late Mr. Gerald Gould's essay on 'Lenglen v. Wills'? No ideas in Mr. Lynd's essay on 'Intolerance'? As well say that there is no genuine poetry in:

'Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
*To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world;.....*' (*Measure for Measure*)
(My Italics)

IV

In sober truth, to encompass the light touch is not easy. Most often, the temperament for that is lacking. The first essential is to educate ourselves to be in a holiday mood now and then: to give free rein to our fancies. The mind should be allowed to wander where it pleases, and it is enough if there is just a wee bit of continuity from beginning to end. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Dogberry these wise words: "To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature." The capacity to impart a light touch to one's essays also 'comes by nature.' When one peruses the productions of the gentlemen I have named above, one feels that the whole affair is as simple as may be and that it could have been dashed off in a trice. The error is perceived when one sits down to attempt the same oneself. Then only will one begin to have respect for the authors of these so-called flimsies. The fact is that in this world nothing is as easy as it seems; and writing, least of all. Mr. Desmond MacCarthy has revealed that behind the apparently effortless ease of Mr. Lynd's writings, there is an amount of genuine labour that would have to be seen to be believed. And why not? The gift of mellifluity does not drop down from the heaven like manna from the skies. It has to be carefully cultivated. There is but one way of adding brick to brick.

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But there are *several* ways of adding word to word. Has not Kipling recorded that there are as many as ninety-nine of writing tribal lays? There is one of paring down as well as one of filling up; and there is one, besides, of imparting a musical quality to the written stuff. Mr. Lynd has, by incessant labour, attained to a prose-style of such grace that it is the envy of many of his contemporaries. Yes; 'grace' is the word. Think you that any of his sentences and paragraphs can be managed as nonchalantly as, say, shelling beans or peeling potatoes? What an imperceptible gradation there is between one sentence of his and another? Mr. Lynd, indeed, like the generality of his countrymen, is a master of English prose. Is it realised by the majority of readers that some of the best English prose has been written by Irishmen? Burke and Goldsmith were Irish. So, if I am not mistaken, was Sheridan. In our own day Mr. Shaw and Mr. Yeats are Irish: the late Mr. George Moore and the late Mr. C. E. Montague ditto; Mr. Robert Lynd and Mr. Desmond MacCarthy the same. There is no doubt that, though England has conquered Ireland, the Irish have proved themselves superior to the English in the matter of the latter's *language*. Perhaps there is something in the air of Erin that is conducive to this.

V

I am, however, not in favour of too much lightness. That is why I am not a great admirer of Mr. E. V. Lucas's essays. I am an admirer of Mr. Lucas himself, of his style, of his scholarship. But I draw the line at his essays. For one thing, he rarely writes what I may call a 'straight' essay. He concentrates his attention almost exclusively on birds and beasts and towns and villages and churches and paintings: I am loth to give the name, 'essays,' to the resulting stuff. It is only on very, very, rare occasions that he condescends to treat of the usual themes; and then he is certainly charming. But his touch is *too, too, light*. That, I think, is a mistake. There must be *some* thought, *some* idea, even in an essay. It need not, indeed, set out to be brimful of notions from the start; but it ought, undoubtedly, to gather some on the way. In a typical essay what happens is that some slight thing or another leads the author on to at least one or two profound speculations. One may begin with

LIGHT, NOT TOO LIGHT

trivial incidents, but one ought to end on a more serious note. Mr. Priestley is the essayist for this sort of thing. His collection of essays called *Open House* is full of it—so full of it that Mr. H. M. Tomlinson could not contain his joy when reviewing it in the old *Saturday Review*. He said that there was so much thought in it that a dozen novels could be made out of it. The praise was not excessive. Take another collection of his essays, *The Balconinny*. There is an essay there that is highly representative of this trait in Mr. Priestley. It is entitled: 'A Fish in Bayswater.' The first sentence is: "The other morning found me walking down Queen's Road, Bayswater, in a deep fit of depression." Well, that is harmless enough, and the subject, indeed, suggests it. Immediately follow these sentences:

"I cannot remember now why I was feeling so depressed, and I do not suppose that I knew at the time. These are the days when we weep and know not why. Not Bass nor Worthington nor all the foaming brewage of the world shall ever medicine us to that sweet peace that we knew yesterday. We may assume that I had discovered that I was not fit for life or that life was not fit for me. I usually incline towards the latter view, and when I am out of spirits I see myself as a baffled idealist, betrayed by the very nobility of my mind, in short, as Hamlet in modern dress.....Some people, whose digestive processes happen to be excellent, advise you to search for the cause during the actual fit of depression and assure you that once the cause is found the mood will pass. Such people, however, forget that you will probably be too depressed to examine yourself, for at such times nothing is worth the trouble it involves. Even the psycho-analyst would make no headway because his first conviction in this state would be that psycho-analysis was useless. Knowing how blasphemous we can become at these moments, I can even imagine him damning the Unconscious."

Then he came to a fishmonger's shop, 'putting out a delightful cool reek of the foreshore,' and saw a very large flat fish.

"The fish itself is not important. I do not know what kind of fish it was, and can only say that it was very large, and very flat, and unusually fishy. The point is, though, that when I saw that fish I immediately thought of the sea.....There came to me, in one glorious rush, thoughts and images of white cliffs on our South Coast, the Yorkshire caves and coves I knew as a boy, great Atlantic rollers a day out from the Azores, Conrad's *Typhoon*, spray

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shooting over the Cornish rocks, the overture to the *Flying Dutchman*, the smell of dying sea-weed and the feel of sand between my toes, the flying fish in the Caribbean, Melville's *Moley Dick*....."

Then he enlarges on this vision that the sight of the fish gave rise to. "I felt a little rush of ecstasy.....Immediately, then, the lights went up everywhere and all life was rich and strange and a marvel, and I was out of spirits no longer." Then he goes on: "These moments are essentially moments of aesthetic vision, and it is out of them that literature and art and music are produced." This leads to a discussion of aesthetics. And he ends in this fashion:

"There was a time when I read and thought about nothing but aesthetics, but once I had recovered I swore that I would never approach the subject again. But if ever I weaken and bring out a thesis, I feel sure that it will open most strangely—with a fish in Bayswater."

Well, *this* is what I mean by an 'essay.' Light enough, but not too light, at places even thoroughly profound, touching, so to speak, 'the kindred points of Heaven and Home.'

Lakshmana Pillai, the Composer

BY M. S. RAMASWAMI

Musical compositions in South India can be divided into three sections: lyrical, recitative, and erotic. Lyrical music developed perceptibly in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and the greatest votary of it was Thyagaraja, that master-singer of Thiruvayyur. Many followed in his wake, and among them prominently feature Paṭnam Subrahmania Aiyar and Ramnad Srinivasa Aiyangar. Thyagaraja was right in singing in Telugu, he being a Telugu Brahmin though he lived in the heart of Tamilnad. But that is not the case with the two that followed him, for they are Tamilians and we are at a loss to know what induced them to compose in Telugu when they had their own mother-tongue, Tamil. Thus Tamil was at the point of losing the lyrical phase of Carnatic music. It was at such a time that Mr. T. Lakshmana Pillai of Trivandrum came to the rescue and saved the Tamil language from the reproach of having no lyrical compositions, and thus his songs form a distinct milestone in the development of Carnatic music.

Mr. Lakshmana Pillai was born on May 3rd, 1864 in a respectable Saiva Vellala family which migrated from the Tamil country. His father, Valia Melezzthu Thiraviam Pillai, was Accountant-General of Travancore. His elder brother, the late Muthukumaraswami Pillai, a brilliant and versatile scholar, was tutor to the late Prince Marthanda Varma, B.A. When Lakshmana Pillai was young, every evening as the lamps were lit, the boy had to sing to his father hymns from the *Thevaram*. Except this we are not aware whether he had any special training in music. At the age of twenty he graduated with Honors in Philosophy from the Maharajah's College, Trivandrum. Emerson was his favourite Western author. When later on, in a till-then-unknown *raga* he composed a song, he called it as 'Amara-senapriya' (Sa, Ri sharp, Ga flat, Ma sharp, Pa, Ni sharp, Sa; Sa, Ni, Pa, Ma, Ga, Ri, Sa). The *Kural*, the *Thevaram* and *Thiruvartupa* are his favourite books in Tamil. He entered the State's service as an auditor and when he retired in 1920 he was

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a Major Treasury Officer. But for the displeasure he incurred, of one of the masterful Dewans of the State due to his uncompromising independence, he would have risen to the same high post which his father before him had so ably held. The services that he rendered to his mother-tongue and music are now being widely recognised by his countrymen. The citizens of Trivandrum have kept his portrait in their Museum. The First Tamils' Conference held at Tinnevely in 1934 honoured Mr. Lakshmana Pillai with the title of 'Isai Thamil Selvar.' And in the Second Tamils' Conference held in the same place, a portrait of his was unveiled. For some time, he was a member of the Travancore Legislative Council. Now he is in quiet retirement in the peace and serenity of a healthy old age, living in a world of his own and devoting his time to art and training up bands of enthusiastic students.

In this secular work-a-day world, Mr. Lakshmana Pillai habitually breathes 'an ampler ether, a diviner air' than ours. He is remote and detached from the world's bluster and brag. He bathes the universe in his thoughts. Nothing less than the whole ever satisfies him, for his is no parochial spirit. He cries out, with Emerson,

'From air and ocean bring me foods
From all zones and altitudes.'

Hence it is that we see in his compositions different streams of thought, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, that are not 'in widest commonalty spread.' Vegetarianism and Humanitarianism too find a place in his songs.

When he was about twenty-seven, he had a providential escape from an accident, which might have turned fatal, at a waterfall some miles off Trivandrum. It was then that he dedicated himself to sing the glory of God. Thus his is the life of one who early consecrated himself to the service of the highest of Muses, the 'finest of Fine Arts,' according to Spencer. By the age of twenty-nine some of his greatest songs had been composed. With very few exceptions, one cannot find in any of his compositions the signature of his name. Many of these songs he sang not in "the ample leisure of golden hours but when the years variegated the patterns in the web of life with shadow and light, and sorrow with death came to him, as when his eldest son went away in the plenitude of youthful promise, leaving a dark-

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ness on his days, and doubts assailed him in the gloom, till dawn and light brought the angel faces of serenity and peace which he had loved long and lost awhile." Srimati Lakshmi, his eldest daughter, a graduate of the Madras University and Lecturer in Music in the Women's College, Trivandrum, who possesses a most remarkable voice, and Srimati Gourikutti Ammal, Music Tutor in the Girls' High School, Trivandrum, are two of the best vocal interpreters of the Master's art. Some years back, with the death of his son L. Virakumar, a serious calamity befell him and Mr. Lakshmana Pillai lost his wonderful voice. Ever since he has taken to the *veena*, which now is his medium of expression. As he sings occasionally when the voice is clear, one is forced to think of those halcyon days when he flooded the ears of his hearers with his powerful voice and feel sorry for the irreparable loss.

The compositions of Mr. Lakshmana Pillai fall under three heads: devotional, ethical, and philosophical. But through all of them runs like a thread of fire the consuming love of God. They are not however in praise of tribal gods but are to the one Impersonal Being, with a few exceptions—the work of his early years. We hear in all of his songs echoes of the fervour and assurance of the strains of the *Thevaram* singers. In two songs 'Uzhzhamura kuvathae Geetham' in Ananda Bhairavi and 'Sangadamae Jagam' in Kunthalavarali he gives his philosophy of music. In 'Irangunenjam' in Mukhari and 'Selvathilae Selvam Jeevakarunyam' in Kedaragowlam he sings of Vegetarianism and Humanitarianism.

'The Silence that is in the Starry Sky
The Sleep that is among the lonely hills'

the sea and storm, sunset and sunrise, all these have their appeal and eternal meaning for him. Like some of the English poets he perceives in Nature a Spiritual Force. 'Aazh Kadaluku Adiyundu' in Kedaragowlam, 'Ennilaimai' in Kambhoji and 'Ninnaruzh polodum neeril' etc. breathe the message of Mother Nature.

To illustrate the growth of his art, let us take three masterpieces of his in Mukhari. The immortal 'Malaika vaendam nenjamae' was composed when he was twenty-eight and "we have in this song a dexterity of touch, vigorous move-

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ment, variegated rhythm, riotous play of musical imagination and gorgeous sound pageantry." The use of rhyme, far from being indefensible, goes to accentuate the rhythm, which is so cleverly being built up in the first two *charanams*, and heads to a climax in the third, so that when it comes to 'Varai nihartha kunchara moorthiyan' etc., in one majestic sweep of melody, one is overwhelmed. In 'Irangunenjam' a piece of middle life, a moving plea for the sanctity of all forms of life, we note that the sea of emotion has curdled into thought. Finally in 'Indudesabandhu Chittaranja Dasanae' which approaches in intensity Thygaraja's 'Ksheenamay' we find how the touches have become quiet but deep, mellowed but intense, and in what short compass the height of intensity can be attained.

It is doubtful whether there is a greater composition in Bhairavi than the *magnum opus* 'Thunbam thudaitha param poruzhae' composed by the time he was twenty-nine. 'Enna Seithalum' in Kambhoji, 'Neeradi' in Sahana and 'Ninnamam Ucharithal' in Neelambari have all their universal appeal. Then there are the exquisite 'Thannuyir' in Sankarabharanam, the tender 'Neeeye Thunai' in Yedukulakambhoji, 'Intha ulakam' in Kalyani. 'Ellam Iraivan' in Kanada, 'Ithanai Arul' in Dhanyasi. Again songs like 'Anparuzham' in Vachaspathi, 'Enkurayena' in Ananda Bhairavi, 'Emmathramintha Manithan' in Byagada, 'Kathruzh' in Saveri 'Sakthiyenakku' in Sarukesi, 'Eesan Puhazh' in Karaharapriya, 'Eesanai Kan' in Mohanam and 'Anchaal' in Panthuvazhi should not be left out in a sketch as this. Sometimes indeed, in our hours of languor and dejection when "the heart is sick, and all the wheels of being slow," these compositions will serve as means of consolation. Better than his words, it is the quaint melody of his songs that will abide long in many ears.

Any consideration of his art necessarily includes a comparison of him with the immortal Thyagaraja. His admiration for Thyagaraja borders on idolatry. In the technique of song, his elaborateness is comparable only to that of Thyagaraja. In the fecundity of variations and the richness of imagination and musical ideas, we have in him God's plenty. Very careful as he is of the *rupa* (form) he is still more concerned with the *bhava* (idea). In Thyagaraja occasionally we come across songs which seem a mere litany of the names of his beloved Deity. But in Mr. Lakshmana Pillai we uniformly find great music with

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the highest thought and bright fancy wedded to happy expression. When early in his career Mr. Lakshmana Pillai attempted his hand at Thodi, the songs always turned out to be entirely reminiscent of Thyagaraja's and were discarded, till he made a desperate attempt by eschewing *panchamam* and produced a master-piece in 'Ekkalathilum.' It may be noted that Thyagaraja's wonderful pieces are in Hanumathodi and not in pure Thodi. Subsequently Mr. Lakshmana Pillai has given us half-a-dozen first-rate songs in this *raga*. From these we can understand how deep was the influence of Thyagaraja on Mr. Lakshmana Pillai.

Once or twice in his life some enthusiastic and expansive admirer tried to drag him from his shy retreat and trumpet his fame in the market-place, asserting possibly with loud asseverations that he is the Tamil Thyagaraja. The great world looked on good-humouredly for a moment or two, and then proceeded as before. And the disconcerted singer was left free to scuttle back to his corner where he is all the happier, sharing the raptures of his students and the charm of his *veena*, for his brief experience of publicity. But now, as his book of compositions has been published, readers of it and lovers and patrons of Carnatic Music will not allow, we hope, the Master-singer to shelter himself in his secluded home, but encourage him to enrich our musical heritage. A book, Dr. Johnson wrote, should help us either to enjoy life or to endure it. Mr. Lakshmana Pillai's book of compositions with *swaram* notation frequently does both.

Open Your Door

BY JAYANGONDAN

(Rendered from Tamil by K. S.)

[Vijayadharma was a Chola king, who lived in the latter half of the eleventh century and in the beginning of the twelfth. His chief minister and commander-in-chief, Karunakara, led an army against the Kalingas, and defeated their king Anantapadma (? Anantavarma) in a famous battle. His poet-laureate, Jayangondan, has sung of the victory in a poem called *Kalingattupparani*.

The following two stanzas are from that part of the poem, where the women of the city are exhorted to throw their doors open and share in the rejoicing.]

I

Open wide your golden door,
Languid lady, walking slowly,
With your anklets lightly tinkling,
And your curly ringlets waving,
Swaying gently, gently swaying,
Like a peacock suddenly wakened;
Maiden of the dew-cool speech,
Open wide your golden door!

II

Lady, who in your black tresses
Keep entangled, plucked and twisted,
Lilies red with honey sweet
And the red hearts of young lovers,
Lady of the lovely tresses,
Open wide your red-gold door!

The Return of Shakuntala

(A STORY)

BY MASTI VENKATESA IYENGAR

(Translated from Kannada by V. M. Inamdar)

It was an evening and near the hermitage of the sage Kanwa on the banks of the river Malini, and two young women were walking from the hermitage and talking in low tones where the road from Hastinavati reached the hermitage.

"It is so late," one of them was saying, "I wonder if they are coming at all. They should have arrived by now."

The other replied: "We do not know what business they may have. I suppose it is not so easy to leave everything and come, now that she is queen of a country. They are sure to come tomorrow, if they do not arrive today."

"I am simply anxious to see dear Shakuntala. It is seven years since we saw her. I wish to see how she is and to see her child," said the first.

"I have been anxious to see her too. Time and again I have seen her in my dreams. Our dear Shakuntala also must have certainly remembered us often."

The one was Anasuya and the other Priyamvada, companions of Shakuntala's girlhood. They were expecting the arrival of Shakuntala, now accepted queen of Dushyanta. She was due to arrive the previous day but had not come. Word had been received that she would be reaching the Ashrama today, and the residents of the Ashrama were waiting at the entrance to receive and welcome the queen. These two friends of hers, however, too anxious to stay there waiting, proceeded up the path hoping to see their friend some minutes earlier.

Waiting for someone to come is under any circumstances a tiresome business, and these two were Shakuntala's life companions, bred and brought up together for years as sisters. Seven long years had elapsed since they had seen her, and that was when she left to join Dushyanta, her husband. Since then there had been no occasion for them to meet her. Goutami, Sharngarava and

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Sharadwata had returned a month after Shakuntala's departure and had made all the inmates of the Ashrama unhappy with the tale of Shakuntala's repudiation. The people of the Ashrama did not know that Menaka had taken Shakuntala from the court, that she spent her days in the hermitage of Maricha, cared for by friends, and that she was delivered of a son there. It is likely that Kanwa knew but he had said no word about it. Old Goutami had one day approached the sage and begged him to say what had happened to Shakuntala later and Kanwa had replied that she was all right, but sometime should pass before her days of sorrow could end. Everything would turn out happily and it was no use thinking of it. This closed the matter then and no one could ask for further details, nor discuss things with him. They had passed the next nearly six years when on a fine day arrived a royal messenger from Hastinavati, and reported to Kanwa how on Hemakuta hill King Dushyanta had met Shakuntala again and how all three, the King, Shakuntala and the Prince Bharata, had returned to the capital. That day the hermitage was all joy. The pious Kulapati was happy and smiled for the first time in six years, and in the evening when Anasuya and Priyamvada brought their children near the sacred fire for his blessing, took the children in his arms and kissed them and played with them. The whole day there were a new joy and jubilation in all his activities. The joy that filled the heart even of a man who had renounced the world could not but make all others happy in the extreme. Even the birds and other animals in the hermitage seemed gayer that day as if they were having a holiday. Continuous contact with the good makes even beasts understand the happiness and the pain of other hearts. The mighty trees that had aged with the sages and shared their austere penance seemed now to soften with the new delight. Happiness at the thought that the Kulapati's daughter was happy, that she was living in the royal palace with her loving consort, that she was bringing up the Emperor-to-be, filled the hearts of all the Ashramites, reached every animate and inanimate thing there, danced over the sparkling waters of the Malini and spread over the Ashrama with the spreading light and air. The royal messenger stayed there for the day enjoying the hospitality of the Kulapati and left next morning with his blessings both for the King and Queen.

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The news that Shakuntala was happy in her royal home at Hastinavati which was only ten days' journey from there, set the hearts of all astir with eagerness. Even Kanwa himself must have desired to see her, and young Sharngarava and Sharadwata who had left her there, alone and helpless, must have been anxious too. But men are less prone to express their desires. Priyamvada whispered her wish to Anasuya who in turn instigated old Goutami. The old lady, also anxious to see Shakuntala, approached the Kulapati in the evening and said:

"I am so eager to see dear Shakuntala, if you will permit."

"What objection?" the sage replied, and continued, "But the girls would also like to see her. Can you leave them and go?"

"I shall take them too," the old woman replied.

The sage said: "Their babies are young and they are inexperienced. Would it be proper for you all to go to see the queen without an invitation from there? It seems to me it would not be. Let us see."

Their hopes were then broken but within two weeks of this incident Shakuntala had sent presents to young and old and all the pet fawns and flowering plants of the Ashrama and had promised that she would be coming in a day or two. It was yesterday that she was due to arrive but in the meantime she had sent word that she would be coming this day. All were expectantly waiting and, as she had not come, doubted again if she had postponed the journey.

Shakuntala on her side was not less eager to see her father, old Goutami, her dearest chums, and the lovely banks of her dear river Malini. Repudiated by the husband that had wooed and loved her, she had spent six years in the hermitage on Hemakuta and the sorrow of that life had so bent her that the girl of eighteen had in six years become old enough for a woman of thirty-five. When her penitent husband came and confessed his error there was no room in her heart for indignation; nor did that heart well up with joy when she returned to Hastinavati, a queen with her son a prince. For, when once the heart has lived through experience like hers, it loses its lightness so far that even the greatest joys of life can move it only a little. The turn of events brought her calm of mind, in that her father and old Goutami would be free

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from care and her friends would no longer bewail her lot. Her son would get what was due to him by birth and she was happy in the thought that he was losing nothing in consequence of anything she had done. It was on this account mainly that she was anxious to see her foster parents and friends as soon as possible and to learn how they had fared all that time, and herself make known to them her own happiness. Shakuntala would have opened the topic of a visit to the hermitage soon after arrival in the capital; but everything was new and she thought it better to wait. This was why a message had been sent. Shakuntala however had sent special words to young and old. On the return of the messenger she also learnt many things about the hermitage and gathered that Anasuya had been married to Sharadwata and Priyamvada to Sharngarava. Some days later she suggested to the King a journey to the hermitage and he had said:

"Certainly. It is right that you go; but, for myself, I cannot come. When I was there last, I offended the Kulapati, and I do not wish to go now. You may go."

Shakuntala smiled and said:

"The offence you gave him then is what has made him now quite happy. Will he mind that?"

"It is not for fear of his anger that I hesitate," the King replied. "It is on my own account. I shall be able to go with you when I have made you happy for some time."

"Then let it be as Father said," said Shakuntala. "I will not go until then!"

The King did not understand her. He asked what the father had said and she explained:

"When I started from the hermitage to meet you, I wondered when next I could go there, and Father said that it would be when you and myself would go there for retirement."

"Oh! That refers to permanent stay there. This visit has nothing to do with that. You must go and comfort them all."

And Shakuntala smiled and said, "Am I a royal ambassador?"

"My dear," said the King, "you ask in jest. I say Yes in earnest."

It was after this that a message had been sent to the hermitage that Shakuntala would be coming there.

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A day was fixed for her departure. That morning Shakuntala finished her morning worship and went to see and take leave of Hamsapadika, fair and lustrous daughter of the King of the Gandharas who had won the heart of Dushyanta some years earlier. Her beauty and charm had ruled over the palace for some years, but one evening when the King returned from his hunt he appeared to be quite out of mind and cold towards the queen. That was not a strange experience for queens in those days, and Hamsapadika suspected that the King's eyes had found some new fascination, and inquired of those that had followed him. Some months later came a pregnant woman claiming the King for her husband. All this conspired to make Hamsapadika's life empty. When the repudiated Shakuntala returned later as veritable queen with a much coveted prince for the King, Hamsapadika felt that she could expect no return of happiness to her life. She feared that Shakuntala would look upon her with strangerly feelings and the usual jealousy of another wife. Shakuntala however had totally falsified her fears and seemed to have brought to Hamsapadika a new joy in life. For, though in the whole palace and elsewhere Shakuntala was proclaimed the principal queen who had brought the King a coveted son, and though naturally the other queens were expected to show her due regard, Shakuntala had herself approached the other queens in humble dignity, and coming to Hamsapadika in particular had bowed down and said:

"You are elders. I am a girl and know nothing. I beg you to look upon me as your sister and instruct me."

This modesty came to Hamsapadika as a pleasant surprise. She drew the new-comer close and embracing her with love had said:

"Whatever is it, sister, that you are talking? It is your word that goes with the King. It is we that should approach you in this fashion."

And Shakuntala, in the simple way she had, replied: "I long to have the love of our King; but I long also for the love of you and my other sisters."

This had won Hamsapadika over and since then they had loved each other more and more. Now when Shakuntala came to take leave before going to the hermitage, Hamsapadika showed some curiosity and asked her how long she would be away, when she would return, who else lived in the hermitage,

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and so on. Shakuntala saw her desire to visit the hermitage and asked her if she too would come. The elder queen said: "You are going to see your own people. Shall I not be an intruder?" Shakuntala pressed her to go and obtained the permission of the queen-mother. This delayed their departure, and as we know word had to be sent to the expectant hermits.

The journey from Hastinavati to the hermitage would generally take ten days to walk. With speed one could walk it in even seven days, and for those blessed ones who could afford conveyances it would be a four days' journey. When the queens had to go, the King made arrangements and ordered retinue to accompany them. The King's beloved jester Madhavya, the great eater, was informed that he should accompany the party. This poor fellow could hardly remember having eaten a single sumptuous dinner from the day of the rejection of Shakuntala. He could not be expected to remember a thing like a dinner even had he eaten one, but the fact also was that even ordinary food with the King had become rare. The return of Shakuntala came to him as happy as a summer shower; and the King in his happiness spiced his dear friend's appetite with fresh varieties of food every day. When on the top of this, he was asked to accompany Shakuntala to the hermitage, Madhavya's joy knew no bounds. He had now the opportunity to show himself as a representative of royalty. At the time of the last visit, he had returned quite unnoticed, not even having seen the Kulapati, as if he meant nothing. Now he could show how wise he was and what high place he held in royal favour. Moreover, there was the prince and there would be as much sport as one wished. The queens and the jester occupied their respective chariots, and with guards escorting, left Hastinavati far behind.

When the prince entered the ladies' chariot, Madhavya gave him a secret invitation to come into his carriage when they had gone some way. Bharata assented and finding after some time the women's company boring, said that he would go to Madhavya. The chariots were stopped and these friends got together. The queens also found this quite convenient. Though Shakuntala would always like her son near, she had now to engage the elder queen, and she did this, occasionally casting affectionate glances at her son now seated in the other car. Madhavya, on the other hand, was engaged in imitating,

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for the amusement of the prince, the cries of all the birds and the beasts. This had gone on between himself and the prince for the last seven days. He was really expert at that sort of thing, for when he imitated the roaring of a lion the horses of the chariot were startled. He went on with this business, cawing, singing, and chattering, and imitating birds and beasts, —lions, tigers, wolves, and foxes, to the complete satisfaction of his little master-friend. At last Bharata asked him to bray like an ass. Madhavaya was afraid of being asked to do the same thing every now and then, and also what people might take him for, if in the midst of the journey he began braying. So he said: "The queens are there. We should not do that in their presence." But the prince would have his own way. "We shall lead our chariot ahead so that they will not hear you, and then you shall bray. Really that is what you do best. Your bray seems so natural." Madhavaya was uncomfortable at this compliment for a moment, but he saw at once that it was the simple and unaffected appreciation of a child and not ridicule. The charioteer was therefore ordered to take them a little ahead, and Madhavaya brayed a number of times to satisfy the prince.

The next evening they arrived in the vicinity of the hermitage. The prince asked the driver to speed up. He wished to be the first to reach the destination and to get acquainted with the inmates before the others arrived, but pretended that it was only to herald the arrival of the queens. The driver also was a young fellow and shared the desire to be the first and unloosed the reins. In no time they were a league ahead of the other chariot and met Anasuya and Priyamvada who were coming down the road. The two first took the chariot for the queen's, but seeing Madhavaya said to themselves that it belonged to somebody else and stepped to a side of the road to make way. The prince inquired of his friend, "Who, dear uncle, are they?" and he replied, "I think they are the friends of the queen." The prince looked at the women a little and felt that that was so. The chariot was therefore stopped and the boy jumped out of it and approached the ladies. Before they could ask who he was, his features told them that he must be Shakuntala's son, and then he put them a straight question: "You are my Mamma's friends, are you not?"

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"Yes," replied Priyamvada and asked, "But where is your mother?"

He told them that she was coming in the second chariot and pointing at them he said with some vivacity, "You are aunt Priyamvada, and you are aunt Anasuya."

"How did you know that?" Anasuya was surprised and she took the child in her arms. The prince placed his small finger upon her nose and explained: "Mother told me that Priyamvada's face is broad and yours a little longish. That was how I came to know you!"

"Is that all? How clever you are!" said Priyamvada and the prince replied: "No. There is another thing. Mother said aunt Anasuya's nose is a little bigger than yours."

The ladies were mightily pleased. They kissed him and said that he was quite like his father and had really grown well. By this time Madhavya came there and talked to them. As they asked how far the other chariot might be, that also was seen in the distance. When Anasuya saw it, she placed the prince on the ground and walked hurriedly towards it. Priyamvada took the prince in her arms and followed. Seeing this group from a distance, Shakuntala ordered the chariot to be stopped, and helping Hamsapadika down the chariot, walked up the road and joined her friends.

How is one to describe in words the emotions of these friends who met each other after so many years! Just a moment before, Priyamvada had been thinking in what manner she should address Shakuntala, now that she was a queen, but actually when she saw her alighting from the chariot her doubt fled, she knew not where. She even forgot that Shakuntala was queen, and, "Dearest Shakuntala, are you well?" was all she could say. She could utter no more words and the tears came unchecked and filled her eyes. Anasuya ran like a child and held Shakuntala in an embrace without a word, sobbing and weeping, with her head on the queen's shoulders. Shakuntala too was not herself for the moment but soon controlled herself and said, "Come now, dear Anasuya. Look who has come," and introduced both her friends to Hamsapadika and said to them, "This is my sister Hamsapadika. She loves me so much." Priyamvada said to Hamsapadika, "It is so good of you to have come. We are happy to have you here." These courtesies over, Shakuntala

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inquired how Goutami and others were, and made excuses to Madhavya for having made the journey so slow and asked her friends, "Is Bharata already friends with you?" "Yes," replied Anasuya, "You seem to have described us to him, but should you tell him that my nose is a little bigger than my sister's?" Shakuntala and Hamsapadika laughed. "Oh! Is this how you talk to people," Shakuntala said to her son, "This is a funny way of making people's acquaintance."

"No, Mother," he replied, "she herself asked me how I recognised them and I told them that you told me about their faces. Then aunt asked me if that was all, and I told her that hers was the bigger nose!" Having finished his explanation the prince kicked a piece of stone with his foot and was off playing and singing. All laughed heartily at the boy's innocent and candid explanation. When joy or grief choke the throats of grown-up persons, the innocent words of a child relieve aching hearts and bring fresh speech to sealed lips; and when persons who have seen too much of human life think that it is nothing, and nothing is worth doing, the hungry cry of a child brings them back to work and gives them assurance that there is much to be done in the world. Priyamvada and Anasuya kissed the boy again, and with Shakuntala on one side and Hamsapadika on the other, walked towards the hermitage. Madhavya followed them and the carts came behind.

Walking slowly up the path, Shakuntala recognised one after another the places which she had known so well. Here on one side was the big tree full of fruit and there was the path leading to the bathing place in the bright-watered Malini. The canal that fed the plants of the garden could also be seen there, and beyond was a herd of deer some of which were looking upon the comers and some peacefully grazing on the lawns. To Shakuntala's eyes the place seemed unchanged, but the old joy that her heart knew was not there. She was happy to come back and see the place that had brought her up, but the ecstasy of those days was gone and she could not understand why. When they arrived at the entrance to the hermitage, there were Sharngarava and Sharadwata and other hermits, men and girls. Sharngarava came forward with the auspicious rice, uttered the blessing meant for royalty, put it over the heads of the queens and the prince, and said: "The Kulapati

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waited here long to receive the queens himself, but as it was time for evening worship he went in, enjoining us to welcome and bring you to the *Yajnawati*." All this courtesy and formality pained Shakuntala greatly but she could not talk and so she put up with it. Sharadwata was simpler. He inquired of her how she was doing, and taking the prince by the hand said to Sharngarava: "The prince is really a prince." "It is the Kulapati's blessings," said Sharngarava and all turned towards the *Yajnawati*.

Sitting before the sacred fire, Kanwa heard of the arrival of the queens and sent a pupil to bid them all come in. Shakuntala would have liked to embrace her father but she was now a queen and the mother of a prince. She therefore only bowed in respectful reverence, and from a distance asked her son to do so too. The Kulapati blessed her. She got up and said: "This is my sister Hamsapadika. She agreed to accompany us. I thought you would be pleased to see her and brought her also." The Kulapati signified approval of everything by gesture and blessed all of them with the holy rice and engaged himself again in his sacred duties for a little while longer. When the evening rites were finished, he inquired of them how they were doing. The young prince behaved with dignity and did not speak in the buoyant manner which he had in the presence of others. In the meantime old Goutami returned from the river, and took her seat near them with the words, "I waited and waited the whole evening, and went to the river exactly when you arrived." All bowed before her and obtained her blessings. After some talk about the King and the royal family, the Kulapati asked Goutami to look to the requirements of the guests as they should no doubt all be tired. All got up and Kanwa smiled and said, "Anasuya and Priyamvada, will you not show them your children?" They both felt bashful at this and answered, "We shall," and all of them went towards the dwelling huts.

There were a thousand things to be talked between Shakuntala and her friends, and Queen Hamsapadika who realised this went to the dining room with the pretext that she would feed the little prince. In the meantime Anasuya and Priyamvada showed their children to their friend and were talking of all and sundry matters in the easeful and happy confidence of

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true affection. They told her of the curse of Durvasas, of their fear, of how things turned out exactly as they feared, of how the Kulapati languished, of how Goutami had pressed and hastened their marriages when Sharngarava and Sharadwata returned from the capital, and how Shakuntala's pet deer had been delivered of a young one, and of its being pregnant again. They talked about each and everything, of the wilful Sharngarava, of the simple Sharadwata and the magnanimous Kulapati, and when the prince returned from his meals Shakuntala put him to bed and herself went with Hamsapadika to supper. The simple and gentle nature of everyone in the hermitage greatly impressed Hamsapadika, and when they had finished supper they spoke for a while in the delightful moonlight and then went to bed. Sharadwata and Sharngarava had to look after their children that night. Sharadwata was a simple and good natured fellow who did not trouble himself much about things. Sharngarava was graver and more serious-minded. He in fact did not wish to get married so soon. Even Priyamvada had wished to put off the marriage, but Goutami had become insistent: "I had to see so much trouble because of negligence. We allowed Shakuntala to grow unmarried into the very prime of youth and tasted much bitterness in consequence. I do not want to taste it again. You must marry." Anasuya and Sharadwata consented to marry, and when Priyamvada refused, the former had said: "You are my elder sister. If you do not marry what is the hurry for me? Let some more time elapse and we shall marry together." The sage knew this, and agreeing with old Goutami married them all the same year. Anasuya had now a daughter and Priyamvada a son. And that night they spent with Shakuntala, gossiping late into the night and going off to sleep.

To Shakuntala who had returned from the palace, this calm rest in the heart of the peaceful hermitage was like the quiet and restful sleep of a tired child by the side of its mother. Her sleep was happy with such dreams as she had not dreamed for years. And in the morning before they got up, the Kulapati came on his round and inquired about them. They got up later, finished their bath and their usual morning worship and went to the *Yajnawati* and bowed before the Kulapati. Shakuntala then went to have a look at her favourite jasmine

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creeper which had now plentifully blossomed. There was the same old beautiful mango-tree and the same pet deer of the wide eyes. This creature could not at first recognise its old mistress and ran away when fondled, but when the friends brought it back and stood it by her side, it seemed slowly to remember an old attachment and waited peacefully by her side. Its young one, which greatly resembled its mother, was at a distance. From there Shakuntala passed on to the places where the King had first seen her, where they had sat, where in sweet pain she had etched her love epistle and where at last they had met and become one. She then reached the bathing ghats of the beautiful Malini. Pictures of her youth passed before her mind, all the joy and gaiety, the youthful zest and the simple ecstatic emotions of those days. Everything was there now as it had been then, perhaps even better, but the spirit of that happiness was not there. A wave of dejection came over Shakuntala and the happy life of her reminiscence seemed to be somebody else's. Hope is not happiness, nor even fulfilment of hope. That alone is happiness which knows nothing to hope for. Shakuntala wandered to other parts in the hermitage and then returned to the huts.

In the afternoon Sharngarava came to her and said: "That day when I took leave of you in the palace, I spoke harsh words, Madam. I wish you to forget them." Shakuntala replied reassuring him: "Do not talk to me so formally, brother. I am after all your sister. What you said was then right. It cannot be otherwise now. I have thought of you only as my brother and I remember nothing else."

In the evening the Kulapati said: "Next time, you should bring the King, my child. Tell him that there should be no hesitation on his part to come to me." Shakuntala assented.

The next morning Shakuntala finished worship and distributed the presents that she had brought, and started back for Hastinavati taking leave of young and old. She well remembered, as everyone else did, her former departure from the place years ago. That day she had walked bare-footed; now she had a chariot. The son that was in the womb then was growing like the moon and sitting by her side. No doubt or misgiving such as she had then, oppressed her mind. All this pleased everybody. To Shakuntala herself it was as if the same day had returned.

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For no reason that she could see, she felt anxious and perturbed as then. She felt that soon she should come to the hermitage with her lord and never return to the capital. Pleasure to be really pleasure should be free from all chance of pain. The smile that covers a forgotten pain is not the smile of happiness. The foster-child of the sage seemed to realise this in that moment. As Shakuntala got into the chariot and started again for Hastinavati, there was an uneasy thought in her mind that life's happiest milestones had been left behind.

Evil and Karma in 'Contemporary Indian Philosophy'

BY N. A. NIKAM, M.A. (CANTAB.)

Two philosophers who have contributed to the volume on *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, and whose opinions deserve the attention of serious students of philosophy, have held two views on the subject. Dr. Dasgupta thinks that Indian Philosophy is surrounded by four unproved dogmas, among which the law of Karma is one. Prof. Wadia says that he got "a satisfactory answer" to the problem of evil "only from the Karma theory of the Hindus." This paper is written partly in the hope of receiving light on this question: whether Karma is one or the other of the views quoted; or, whether some part of it is a 'dogma,' and some other part of it 'a satisfactory answer.' Is there any logical basis for the theory of Karma? Are there any other beliefs consistent or inconsistent with this?—These are the questions that I propose to discuss.

I

That evil exists is a fact. I do not think any one will deny or even doubt that evil in the form of physical suffering and moral injustice exists, whatever difference of opinion there might be about its explanation. It is not enough to think that these alone are evil. Absence of goodness or virtue is also an evil. Either it is true that virtuous people suffer pain, and this is an evil; or, that there are no virtuous people, and this is also an evil. In trying to explain evil, what we are trying to do is to make it consistent with certain other facts or beliefs, such as the goodness of God, and even His existence. If there is an explanation possible, it will also be an answer to the question, "What is the cause or origin of evil?" And any explanation must satisfy the purely logical demand for coherence. Belief in Karma is identical with our belief in the reign of Law, and this has its foundation in the conception of, or belief in, the order and rationality of the universe.

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I would claim for the theory or law of Karma a formal property that is claimed for purely physical and logical laws: the assertion of 'hypothetical' necessity of the form "If A then B." It is quite consistent with this to suppose that there is no absolute necessity that the antecedent of the proposition "If A then B" should exist. If there were no antecedent, there would be no consequent. I submit that belief in Karma is an application to conduct of this kind of necessity.

The proposition "If A then B" might mean only the empirical fact of causality: the sort of relation which we have known, at least in some instances, to obtain between two events, of which one event preceded the other in time and was known as cause and the later event as its effect. And where in a particular instance the theory of Karma was accepted as a valid explanation, it would mean no more than that a certain event, in the sphere of conduct, present now, could be explained by another event which was past etc. That belief in the theory of Karma takes, in the minds of most people, this kind of explanation, will not be denied. It will not be far from the truth to say that in less critical minds it is associated with fatalism. It is evident, however, that this is only part of the truth. It is dogmatic to suppose that there is only one kind of explanation: from the past to the present. If belief in Karma meant only this, then it is easily rejected on general grounds. It is not certain that all events could be brought under the purely mechanical determination of the past to the present. And if this were the only kind of explanation possible, but failed to explain some facts, our faith in the order and rationality of the universe would be uprooted. But, it is evident, belief in Karma must be consistent with this fundamental postulate, even where it did not mean the empirical and contingent relation of cause and effect. So far as I can see, this is possible by the admission that Karma does not mean only the relation of cause and effect, but the principle of sufficient reason in the realm of conduct. We are not aware of causes of events in every case, nor is it proved that every event should have a cause; but it is a necessity that an event must have sufficient reason for its occurrence. Nothing that I have said is inconsistent with the kind of necessity that, I think, belief in Karma implies. If there is evil, then, there is a sufficient reason for its existence.

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What are the implications of belief in Karma? I think there are two implications: if we believe in Karma, we believe (a) in the reality of moral freedom; and, (b) in the reign of law in conduct. These implications are present in the popular statement, "Man is the author of his fate." Now, it seems to me quite certain that none of these implications could be called 'dogmas.' On the contrary, there are good reasons for considering that these are 'a satisfactory answer' to the problem of evil. For, without moral freedom, morality would be impossible; without belief in the reign of law, the conception of the universe as a cosmos is impossible.

Certain deductions could be made from all that I have said, and these deductions are the following: (a) The existence of evil is 'hypothetical.' There is a cause or a sufficient reason for its existence; in the absence of that cause evil will disappear. (b) It is logically possible that a world could exist, without evil existing in it as a part.

I think belief in Karma implies belief in the two sets of conditions stated. So long as our belief in Karma means the assumptions of these general sets of conditions, no one will seriously doubt their validity. For, any explanation of the problem of evil that has the least claim to plausibility must consider these, and assume, more or less, similar hypotheses.

II

But there are other parts of the doctrine which appear to me to be in the nature of 'dogmas.' Belief in Karma means, as popularly stated, "Man is the author of his fate." I think we ought to state this in a stronger form: we ought to say that each existent (or soul) is the author and the *only* author of its fate, and no one else. This would remove responsibility for the existence of evil from God. No other being could have any influence, moral or metaphysical, in shaping the destiny of any existent except itself.

In Indian philosophical literature, however, belief in the law of Karma is very closely associated with another belief, transmigration of souls. It is claimed that belief in transmigration satisfies man's "logical as well as moral consciousness."¹ Before we could admit this, we have to be fairly certain about something

¹ *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* By. M. Hiriyanna. P. 80.

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else that is very important. It seems to me that the two beliefs, Karma and transmigration, are logically independent even if they are very closely associated. It is not inconsistent to believe in the theory of Karma and yet not believe in transmigration. For, it is quite conceivable--and there is nothing self-contradictory in this--that a soul had existed, temporarily in a body, for the duration of what we call 'life,' and yet was not again associated with another body. We can see that that life would yet be governed by the law of Karma. And, unless it was the case that there was a balance of pleasure or pain left over, that needed the duration of another life and association with another body to enjoy the pleasure or suffer the pain, it is not evident that there is any logical necessity for the soul to transmigrate. This would again imply two conditions:

(a) It would have to be proved, or believed in with a reasonable degree of probability, that a soul could enjoy pleasure and suffer pain, as reward and as retribution, *only* by being associated with another body.

And, secondly, (b) there should be a very great degree of probability, if not proof, or it must be a postulate, that the soul survived the death of its physical body. Between belief in Karma and belief in transmigration, immortality of soul is there as an implicit premise.

Now, how is this introduced? I do not think belief in the theory or law of Karma entails belief in immortality of soul; because, it is clear, at least to me, that a soul could be governed by the law of Karma in the duration of its association with a body, and yet had no such association after the event called 'death.' Such association would be a contingent fact. Nor could it be argued that transmigration entails immortality; rather, it is quite the other way round. Immortality may or may not imply transmigration. And unless it was true that the soul survived the death of its physical body, there would be no ground for believing in transmigration. Immortality of soul and its transmigration are logically independent. Belief in transmigration implies belief in immortality; but, belief in immortality does not necessarily imply transmigration. I am inclined to think, therefore, that immortality of soul would have to be proved on independent grounds. Belief in the theory of Karma does not prove that the soul is immortal, and unless

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this was proved it is inconsistent to base transmigration on acceptance of the theory of Karma.

III

Although I have raised these objections--and these are the sort that would be raised—I do not claim to have disproved the theory of Karma. I would yet think that the theory of Karma is a contribution to speculative philosophy. If it borders on the mystical, it is because neither philosophy nor religion can long dissociate themselves from mysticism. Belief in Karma, perhaps, makes the least possible assumptions and begs the fewest possible questions. I would prefer belief in Karma to the belief in the theory of vicarious punishment and vicarious atonement, or the belief that a soul was *created* whenever it entered into an association with a body; and that after the dissolution it had to wait, indifferently, till doomsday. Although the conclusion that I drew was only negative, yet it is important, because it clears a possible confusion. We may accept belief in Karma, but we cannot make it prove more than what it could prove. It does not prove immortality; and unless this was proved, Karma does not lead to belief in transmigration. We should have to accept immortality as an independent postulate, or try to prove it by arguments. It is my opinion, however, that immortality could be proved by arguments that are as satisfactory and clear, or at least as plausible as any. Then, the joint assertion of the two beliefs, Karma and immortality, would imply the assertion, I think, not of a necessary truth, but of a *contingent* truth, transmigration. It is possible to conceive of an instance where the soul was associated with a body, and after the dissolution, survived the death of that body, and yet did not transmigrate. I think that in discussions on Karma, we ought to say explicitly, and for the sake of clearness, that Karma does not entail immortality; that this is an independent premise.

But we have to admit, I think, that transmigration is a logical consequence of certain other beliefs which we seem to entertain. In that sense, and only in that sense, do I think that it satisfies man's "logical and moral consciousness" and this admission is not inconsistent with what I said previously: that belief in Karma and in immortality leads to a contingent truth or fact, transmigration. Now, it seems to me, that beliefs which logi-

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cally lead to belief in transmigration are the following, and, *only* the following: (a) belief in immortality, (b) belief in a soul being governed by the law of Karma during its existence in a body; (c) belief that a soul could suffer, or enjoy or *appear* to suffer or enjoy, its pain and pleasure as retribution and as reward, only by existing in a body; and, (d) the belief that there was a balance of pain or pleasure left over, that needed the association with another body.

I will make brief comments on these. I have already said, perhaps rashly, that immortality could be proved on independent grounds. And I would prove it by arguments based on the unreality of time. Most people would accept it, I suppose, as a postulate. I cannot enter into a discussion on it in this paper. About belief in Karma, I have endeavoured to prove that it has a logical basis: that it satisfies the purely logical demand for coherence. Now, if there is any doubt at all, it would be about the last two beliefs. I think there is enough evidence in psychology to show that all our pleasure-pain, or pleasure-unpleasure, feelings have organic origin. But, I think, the mere notions of pain and pleasure as retribution and as reward, is a very small part of the belief in Karma. Transmigration, if it is a fact, would be indeed trivial if it meant just the enjoyment and suffering of past Karma. If transmigration is to satisfy man's "logical and moral consciousness," it would on the exalted assumption that re-birth was necessary for every existent in order to realise its nature, which is the essence of perfection. In the lives of some very rare souls, it is possible, perhaps, to realise this in the duration of one and only association with a body. There is nothing logically impossible in this. But it is self-evidently not the case with a great many. If I would believe in transmigration at all, I would do so not as the enjoying or suffering of what I have done in my past life, although this might be the case, but as a *condition* for the progressive realisation of each existent of its inner nature, which is such that, in the language of Leibniz, it "mirrors the nature of God."

Although these beliefs are, as I said, in the nature of 'dogmas,' yet, I would regard these as 'a satisfactory answer.' And I do not know if there are any beliefs that would not be more dogmatic than these; or explained with the greatest plausibility, or, if you like, coherence, the persistent problems of human existence.

‘The Crowd’

BY V. R. TALASIKAR

It must be nine o'clock in the night when, after dining out, I thought of going back to my room. Everywhere there was an unusual excitement, a peculiar exhilaration among the people. It seemed as if some powerful alcoholic drug had stirred the masses to their very depths. Groups of persons were hurrying along the well-lit road; they appeared like dancing bubbles. I had under my arm *Tremendous Trifles* by G. K. C. which I was reading that day. Although I am not a Christian, I would like to make two confessions. The first is that, however we may try to confess, we cannot confess fully; and the second is, that I have a strong antipathy for a crowd. I shudder to contemplate a crowd; I instinctively shun it. I feel that somehow or other my higher susceptibilities and faculties are smothered under a rampant philistinism. It is ever a puzzle to me how men of parts manage to live in the din and bustle and the sick hurry of great towns. The same difficulty confronts me whenever I go to Bombay, for there one must dive only into the depths of the sea to find a region of silence. Hating feverish industrialism, I chose Poona which is a halfway house between ultra-modern civilisation and barbaric darkness.

When I stepped out, I had exactly these two extremes before me. The external surroundings seemed to be in a jubilant mood, while I was moody. My eyes were dazzled by the intense lights on both sides of the street, but in my mind it was fearfully dark. Men and women, boys and girls, and students of both sexes were in a feverish haste, but my mind was a desolate plain with a ghastly noise of the wind. I had recently seen the crowd wrecking the Bastille in the ‘Tale of Two Cities’; my mind was an underground cell in which I was hugging myself closer and closer. My mind was filled with an uncanny silence, while I was growing more and more impatient with the crowd. My mental state was like that of a man who had a deadly aversion for noise—who hated it, but was persecuted by it.

'THE CROWD'

Thus the two wheels of a cart, the natural surroundings and the mind, instead of acting in unison were pulling in different directions. I can give you a simile for this, that of a cross-eyed man. I was holding fast to my mind and was surreptitiously looking at the passers-by. People of various castes, occupations and creeds were flocking to hear Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's appeal to vote for the Congress. All people were going to the northern corner of the city, while I was the only man going to the south. At that moment I felt that my feet were leaving the ground and I was soaring higher and higher like a bird. From a terrible altitude I saw in my imagination that an enormous crowd had gathered round the northern corner of the city. I wondered whether the equilibrium of the city would not be disturbed. It resembled a huge ant-hill with countless streams of ants flowing towards it. But the fire of my imagination was soon extinguished and I was suddenly precipitated into stern reality.

I thought that people were pointing at me and I felt a bit humiliated. The next moment I was a little cynical at the absence of the nationalist sentiment in me. Even barbers and cobblers were shouting for the Congress; while I apprehended that conscience had made a coward of me—a student of law. I went a little further, and I met my fellow-students, some of whom were girls who were junior to me, hotly discussing political problems. I confess that I felt disconcerted and for a moment ashamed of my usual opinion that politics was ephemeral.

I was looking at the streets and houses, but I did not *see* them. Men and women appeared like so many dummies (who were being guided by some transcendental agency). My eyes and ears did not seem to receive anything. I was not conscious where I was going. The subconscious within hated the crowd and propelled me away from it to a place to which every mortal being has to return!

It took some time for me to realise where I was standing. The sight of burning pyres around me, and the noise of breaking skulls, told me that I was standing on the cremation ground. I thought that God was satisfying my morbid craving for silence—for avoiding the crowd—with a vengeance. What a gruesome sight, a man avoiding a crowd of living beings, stand-

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ing in a crowd of corpses and in pitchy darkness, with the flickering flames of burning corpses to light his face! Imagine a man hating earthly riches but who is made a Shah Jehan and made to live near the Taj Mahal. Imagine a man hating the insufferable heat in the tropics, being placed in the caves of the Himalayas. Imagine a man who wishes to purify himself with a sip of water of the holy Ganges, drowning in the Gange-tic floods. Imagine a man hating the crowd, being driven to a cemetery with a crowd of people whose souls have departed!

* * * *

I could not stand it. I fled to my room.

Reviews

Jatadharan and other Stories.—By K. S. Venkataramani (The Svetaranya Ashrama, Mylapore, Madras. Price Rs. 1-8.)

"These are sketches rather than stories..." begins the author himself in describing them in his Preface to the book. But none of Venkataramani's many admirers can help echoing Mr. N. Raghunathan's pertinent remark in his Foreword, "But what does the name matter?"

If the South Indian village and the incidents of early youth have a perennial fascination for any one, it is for Venkataramani. The vivid pen-pictures of village life in his earlier works have again come before us in all their unfailing beauty. We even come across the Ramus and the Janakis, the Kedaris and the Kokilams, the Sundarams and the Saraswatis, not to speak of the same old "eddy-eyed, love-dimpled" Cauveri and the Akkurs and Alavantis of the Tamil-land. There is no knowing when the author will tire of his pet themes, or we of him. On the other hand, despite his very limited range of topics, his hold on our sympathy and imagination shows no slackening. For, there is in him, what we generally despair of finding in many of our present day writers, the creative instinct of a true artist.

'Jatadharan, the Pial Teacher' deserves in every respect the place of honour in this collection of nine stories. All the wealth of comment and detail which Venkataramani's gifted pen alone could revel in, have been lavished on introducing Jatadharan to the readers. But there is a sadness tinged with a sense of humour and affection running through the story of Jatadharan, which makes us forget even the author's partiality for astrology, the 'Science of Sciences.' If no newspapers had chronicled his death and no tears had followed him to his grave, we would still cherish Jatadharan. If Jatadharan himself deplores that his honest and hard labour has not produced another like him, we shall have to share the grief with the feeling that Venkataramani also has not produced another like him.

'Jatadharan's Marriage' gratifies our curiosity to know why he remained single and alone in life. We can never forget the sad words of Jatadharan to his inconsolable mother: "Marriage for me, Mother, would but break two souls—an earthen pot that floats down the river of life best reaches the sea unblest by the touch of another." We feel the lump in our throats.

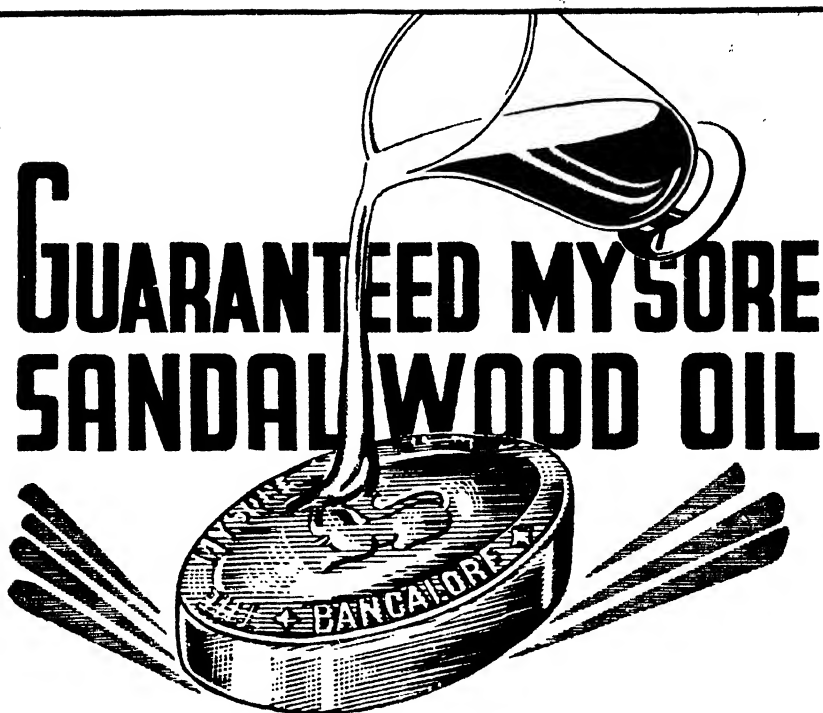
'In Quest of Power' reminds us forcibly of the snatches of reverie that 'The Sand Dunes' on the Cauveri evoked from

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The Adventures of the Black Man in His Search for God.—
By H. M. Singh. (Published by the Lion Press, Lahore, India.)

Shaw's entertaining publication "The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search For God" provoked the work entitled "The Adventures of the White Girl in Her Search For God" from the pen of Mr. C. H. Maxwell. Mr. H. M. Singh in his "The Adventures of the Black Man in His Search For God" gives his reply to these two books. The gist of his work is that the civilisation of the West has strayed from the ideals of Christ, and that in the pursuit of material objects it has forgotten the eternal verities of life. "The Black Man remains what he essentially is.....the symbol of Truthfulness, Simplicity, Humility, and Service. He poohpoohs the materialistic and godless West and laughs a hearty laugh." The book concludes with the magnificent thesis of Mahatma Gandhi on the subject of the existence of God. The protest against certain aspects of life in Europe and America is undoubtedly justified by facts, but there is the grave risk that these seamy features may blind us to the solid and enduring contribution of the Western world to human life and civilisation. A state of self-complacency, which prevents the East from perceiving its own drawbacks, can hardly be helpful. But the exigencies of polemics may justify a more sweeping line of reasoning than the standards of dispassionate judgment will permit; and Mr. H. M. Singh may well be pardoned for making a spirited retort to those Westerners whose racialism takes undesirable forms.

N. S. SRINIVASAN



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